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Nick Carter Stories

THE SULTAN'S PEARLS

OR

NICK CARTER'S PORTO RICO TRAIL

NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE SULTAN'S PEARLS;

Or, NICK CARTER'S PORTO RICO TRAIL.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN WHO WAS LOST.

"Man overboard!"

Nick Carter—known to the captain and crew of the tramp steamer *Cherokee* as Sykes, the bos'n—heard this shout, taken up by man after man, as he lay stretched out on the foc's'le head, in the early morning, just as the ship nosed her way into San Juan harbor, on the northern coast of Porto Rico.

The thrilling warning that somebody has fallen into the sea, which always sends a shock through both crew and passengers whenever heard, does not permit any ordinary person to remain quietly dozing.

The famous detective was one of the first to rush over to the side of the ship when the alarm had been given.

Close by him were his two assistants, Chick and Patsy Garvan, who, in the rôles of common sailors, had come down to Porto Rico to help him get back the fortune in jewels which had been stolen from Stephen Reed, the well-known New York millionaire.

"Who is it, chief?" asked Patsy, forcing his way to the front.

"I haven't heard."

"One of the crew, I suppose?" hazarded Chick.

"No doubt. There is only one passenger on board now, Paul Clayton. It isn't he, for there he is, behind you."

Meanwhile, under orders from Captain Bill Lawton himself, two life rings, each with some thirty fathoms of line attached, had been hurled over in the direction of where the drowning man might be expected to be.

It was too dark to make out plainly anything in the water, but a sharp lookout was kept for an hour, until the vessel reached her anchorage and the "mud hooks" were let go.

"Well, we couldn't do any better," grunted Captain Lawton, through his shaggy mustache, as he and his big, two-fisted first mate, Van Cross, stood together on the bridge. "We might have a roll call of the crew. I don't know who it was went over. I reckon it wasn't anybody who might have become President of the United States, nor nothing like that."

The saturnine skipper gave vent to a husky "Haw-haw!" at his own joke, and Van Cross joined in with an equally raucous guffaw.

Nick Carter was the only person on board the *Cherokee* who thought of a certain possibility which would attach more importance to the falling off the vessel of the man than its commander had supposed.

"Patsy!" whispered Nick. "Go to Mr. Clayton's cabin and see if that suit case of his, containing the Reed jewelry, is safe."

"I can't see it unless Clayton is there," objected Patsy.

"Naturally. But he is there. I saw him go down just now. You may tell him I sent you to inquire."

"Who shall I say? Sykes?"

"Of course. I have no other name on the *Cherokee*."

As Patsy Garvan disappeared to obey his chief, although without understanding what it all meant, Nick Carter beckoned to Chick, and the two went down a forward hatch.

"What's the idea, chief?" asked Chick.

"I want to see that the prisoners are secure, Chick. It has always been difficult to keep John Garrison Rayne behind the bars—except when he is inside the stone walls of a State's prison—and I have not much faith in the place they have him in on the *Cherokee*."

"The same about his man French, I suppose?"

"French is an insignificant scoundrel," returned Nick. "He is entirely under Rayne's influence. I dare say he regrets that he ever was persuaded to come on this ship—to act as assistant engineer and to do what he could toward robbing Clayton of the Reed jewelry."

"The whole case strikes me as curious," observed Chick.

"To begin with, the robbery of Stephen Reed was traced directly to Paul Clayton, the passenger they call Miles."

"I know, Chick. But I don't want that talked about."

"Nobody's talking about it," rejoined Chick. "Except to you. Of course, I think enough of Clayton—and his sweetheart, Lethia Ford—to be glad you are letting him go. But that isn't all. If there should be any hitch about the delivery of the loot to Stephen Reed, it might put you in a bad position."

Chick spoke with a gravity and directness that no one else would have ventured on with Nick Carter. But as the principal assistant of the great detective he had gained the right to advise with his chief, and the latter valued his counsel.

"There will not be any hitch," answered Nick positively. "Paul Clayton has kept a constant eye on his suit case ever since we got it away from Rayne the other day."

"Rayne nearly had it, in the engine room, that time," remarked Chick, with a shrug.

"I cannot admit that," was the detective's quick negative. "He had stolen the suit case, jewelry and all, from Clayton's stateroom, it is true. Also, he had stowed it away in the engine room. But, unless he got it off the ship, of what use could it ever have been to him?"

Chick shook his head dubiously.

"He's as cunning as any old-time Indian, and you can't tell what he might have done. No wonder they call him the Apache."

"He is called the Apache partly because he is so ruthless when pursuing any object," said Nick. "Remember that. I don't believe I ever knew another white man with quite so cruel a disposition. He neither asks nor gives quarter. I give him credit for being a fighter. Only, like the Indian warrior of thirty or forty years ago, he is not satisfied with merely overcoming his foe. He wants to torture and kill him, too. But, come on, Chick! We'll take a look at the door of his glory hole, anyhow. I don't suppose it was Rayne who jumped or fell overboard just now. But I want to make sure."

Chick was a few paces ahead of his chief as they turned a corner in a narrow passage, lighted by an oil lantern swinging from the ceiling, and it was Chick who exploded in a shout of astonishment and dismay.

"Chief! He's gone!"

"Who?"

"Rayne!"

Nick Carter required only one glance at the open door of the confined space used as a prison cell on the *Cherokee* to understand that the man who had gone overboard was really John Garrison Rayne, the international crook, known as the Apache.

There were three cells in a row. When not employed as prisons they were used as storerooms for rope, spare canvas, and similar material. Now one was full of such stuff, the second was locked, and the third stood open.

"Well, it doesn't so much matter," remarked Nick Carter, when satisfied that Rayne had got away. "Of course he dived off the ship and swam to shore. He may hang about San Juan. But most likely he will get away as soon as there is a ship sailing that suits him. We have the comfort of knowing that he failed to steal the Reed jewelry, and that is the main point, after all. Come on, Chick! We'll go on deck."

Hardly had they got there when they heard Captain Lawton raging profanely up and down.

"Six hundred dollars!" howled the skipper. "In good American money! Took it out of my locker, and had to break a lock that was strong enough for a jail door! But I'll get the thief somehow, Mr. Cross!"

Van Cross, who had been enjoying a quiet cigar, looked down from the bridge, and, in a surly tone, asked what was wanted.

"Line up the whole crew and find out first who it was that went overboard," growled Captain Lawton.

"I can tell you that," put in Nick Carter, in his character of Sykes, the boatswain.

"Whoever he is, he got six hundred dollars out of my cabin!" roared the skipper. "I'll skin him alive when I get my hands on him. Who is he?"

"The passenger you shut up for'ard for trying to steal the property of the passenger you call Mr. Miles," replied Nick. "He has got out of the brig, and he is not on the ship."

"What?" bellowed the wrathful skipper. "Do you mean to tell me that lubber has broken out? Who is he, anyhow? He says he is a business man, and he looks like it. Do you know anything about him?"

"I think I do," replied the detective. "I believe he is an ex-convict named John Garrison Rayne."

"John Garrison Rayne?" shouted Lawton. "I've heard of that fellow. He operates all over this continent."

"And on others, too," put in Chick.

"Come down to my cabin with me, Sykes, and help me go through my sea chest again. Bring your two men with you. Come on, Cross! I'll rummage it from top to the very bottom."

That is exactly what they did do. The locker belonging to Captain Lawton was an old-fashioned affair, such as seamen were more accustomed to use fifty years ago than in these days.

They had everything out and in again before the skipper was convinced that his money really was gone.

"Cross!" he bellowed.

The mate stepped to his side, looking at him questioningly.

"I'm going ashore!" announced Captain Lawton.

"When?"

"Now!" thundered the commander. "I'm going to find that lubber who dived overboard with my money. And, when I get him, I'll turn him inside out. Then I'll——"

"I wouldn't," advised Van Cross. "You have to look after the ship now we are in port."

"You can do that," interrupted Lawton savagely. "A captain can trust his first mate to do some things, can't he?"

"Sure!" assented Van Cross. "But I don't believe you'd ever find that man if you did go after him. Now, here's this Sykes, who has just said he knows the man. Why don't you let him go?"

"How do I know he'd ever come back?"

"He hasn't got his wages, has he?" grinned Cross. "Don't give him anything to spend, and he's bound to come back. Besides, he's got it in for that tall, gray-haired lubber himself. I know that from some words he let drop when he didn't know I was near."

Nick Carter overheard this confab, notwithstanding that it was conducted in hoarse whispers, and it coincided with his inclinations exactly.

He wanted to get ashore, for he was nervous over the way Rayne had left the ship.

He knew it was not like the Apache to give up a purpose he had nearly carried to fruition without fighting it to the end, and he believed something more would be heard of him before they were out of San Juan.

It would suit Nick exactly to go ashore, and, as he did not know just when he would be back, he resolved that he would take at least one of his assistants with him.

He was glad when he found that the master of the *Cherokee* was willing that he should go.

"Will you go into the town and see if you can get any trace of that lubber who jumped overboard, Sykes?" asked Captain Lawton, turning to him with as propitiatory an expression as his rocky face would permit. "Just loaf around in saloons and places where you'd be likely to pick up news."

"And if I find the man?" asked Nick.

"Bring him aboard, and I'll deal with him," was the significant answer. "Once you find him, that will be enough."

"How many men can I have with me?" asked Nick.

"How many do you want?"

"Two. Give me my two old shipmates. We've worked together before, and I'd rather have them than anybody else."

The captain gave a growling consent, and Nick Carter went forward to get his two assistants.

"The suit case is all right," announced Patsy. "I talked to Clayton, and he said he would not let it out of his hands until he had taken it to a bank in San Juan."

"The wise course!" approved Nick. "We are going ashore—you and Chick—with me."

"Bully! To get Rayne?" asked Patsy.

"If we can."

"Well, you bet we can," was the confident response, accompanied by a chuckle of delight at the prospect of some real action.

CHAPTER II.

A HEADQUARTERS DETECTIVE.

Nick Carter and his two assistants had been gone since the morning, and no report had come from them, nor had any one else gone ashore from the *Cherokee*, when, at about three o'clock in the afternoon, Captain Lawton told Van Cross he was going to see the agents to whom were consigned his miscellaneous cargo, so that he could begin to unload in the morning.

"Those fellows here would never come to me unless I went to them," growled the commander. "They think a tramp steamer doesn't need to be treated like a ship belonging to a regular line. Well, I'll make them pay for that, too. You'll see. Cross—you'll see!"

He dressed himself in what he called his shore-going toggery, and gave orders for a boat to be brought around to the foot of the sea ladder, with four men.

Captain Bill Lawton had his own little vanities. One of them was to go ashore in a strange port in state, with four oarsmen to propel him from his ship to the landing stage.

As the captain prepared to descend to his boat, he turned to Van Cross and shook his fist at the town across the harbor.

"What are you going to do, cap?" asked Cross carelessly. "What have the people of San Juan done to you?"

"Done? Some of them have got my six hundred dollars."

"You mean that high-toned passenger of ours has it?" grinned the mate. "You can't blame the people of Porto Rico for that."

"Can't I?" yelled Lawton. "Well, I do. When I get ashore the police have got to get my wad back for me. If they don't, by Cæsar, I'll raise a revolution in politics in the town that will put half of 'em out of a job."

It was at this moment that he saw a boat coming up to the *Cherokee* in a businesslike way, with a frowning, dignified man in some sort of uniform cap in the stern, while two fellows, who looked like ordinary dock wallopers, plied the oars.

The official in the stern was dark-haired, and wore a heavy black mustache. He had eyes that seemed to pierce anything at which they looked. It was not easy to say just what color they were. In some lights they seemed to be a yellowish green, like an angry cat's.

"Hello!" he shouted, in a gruff voice, as he saw Lawton.

"Hello!" replied Dawton, equally gruff.

"This the *Cherokee*, from New York?"

"Yes."

"Captain William Lawton in command?"

"That's my name."

The captain had had an occasional argument with the police of San Juan, as he had in many other ports, on account of doubtful cargoes. He did not care for the police on general principles, therefore.

As this man in the boat, who looked like a lieutenant in undress uniform, questioned him, he tried to think of anything he had done against the law in Porto Rico the last time he had been there.

The man in the boat did not give him much time to think, however. He told his men to row up to the ladder and make fast.

They hardly had had time to obey, when he stepped out of the boat, and with one hand touching the hand rope lightly, as if he did not need its help, mounted to the deck.

His eyes seemed to take in everything at a glance, including the crew and captain. He touched Lawton on the elbow in a peremptory way.

"Take me to your cabin. I want a word with you," he snapped. "There is my card."

He thrust the card into Lawton's hand, and pointed, with an offhand gesture, to the companionway. The captain read the words on the card with anything but a comfortable feeling. They were:

"Detective Lieutenant Sawyer, New York City."

That was all, but it was more than enough for the skipper of the *Cherokee*. He did not know that he ever had seen a detective's card before, but he supposed this was the regular formula.

Only a few moments previously, Captain Lawton had been anxious to get to the police, to complain about the loss of his six hundred dollars. Now that there was a detective at his elbow—probably a good one—he felt nervous. His own record was not clean, and he feared that this stern-mannered Sawyer might know more than would be healthful for him.

When they reached the cabin, the detective shrugged his shoulders as he glanced about him.

"Lost anything?" he snapped. "Looks as if you'd been making a search down here."

"I've lost six hundred dollars."

"Stolen?"

"Yes."

"Some of the crew?"

"One of 'em. A man I signed on in New York, just to help him out. He was flat broke. This is what he did to me in return. Came down here and looted the cabin. But I'll get him! I'll sure get him! If he's anywhere in Porto Rico, I'll get him."

"Don't you think he was drowned?"

"No. Some of the crew saw him swimming, and he was headed for shore. It was early morning, and not light. That gave him a chance to get away, and he made the shore all right, no doubt."

"You only think that, don't you? You are not sure?"

"Sure enough to satisfy me," growled Lawton. "In fact——"

"Well, that's no business of mine," interrupted Sawyer. "I want you to answer a few questions."

The imperative manner of this man from police headquarters, New York, awed Captain Bill Lawton, in spite of himself, and he prepared to tell anything that might be asked of him.

"All right, lieutenant," he grunted.

"Have you a passenger on board named Miles?"

"Yes."

"Where is he?"

"In his stateroom, I believe. He went in there a while ago, and I have not seen him on deck since."

"Is he a young man, who looks as if he might be a sort of society darling—plenty of money and nothing to do but to blow it in?"

"That fits him."

"Tall, rather light-brown hair, gray eyes, and straight nose?"

"That's a photograph of him," replied Lawton. "You've got his description all right. What about him?"

"Nothing much."

As the detective lieutenant said this carelessly, he took a pair of handcuffs from the left-hand pocket of his coat and placed them in one on the right.

The captain started. This looked like serious business for somebody. So long as it was not for himself, however, he did not care. Excitement was pleasant to him, as a rule.

"What do you want him for?" he asked in a low tone. "He has kept himself away from me and the other officers all through the trip. I didn't think much about it, but I can see now why it was."

"That was the reason," remarked Sawyer dryly. "He's charged with stealing about eighty thousand dollars' worth of diamonds and other jewelry from Mr. Stephen Reed, of New York."

"What, the multimillionaire?" exclaimed the captain. Sawyer nodded.

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Lawton. "I heard of that job before I left New York. But it never struck me that I had the man who did it right on my ship. Why, say!" he added eagerly, moved by a sudden thought.

"Well?"

"I'll bet it was he who took my six hundred dollars! I'll——"

Captain Lawton made a dive across the saloon toward the door of a stateroom. Sawyer grinned momentarily, straightening his face before the other could look around.

"Wait a minute, captain!" he ordered. "Don't ask him anything about your six hundred. Leave that to me."

"I'd like to take him by the throat and throttle the money out of him," hissed Lawton.

"I dare say. But that wouldn't be according to law. Let me handle him. If he has your money, I'll guarantee that you'll get it back."

"All right!" answered the captain reluctantly. "If I have your word, why——"

"Well, you have my word," was the quick assurance. "I'll hide behind this curtain at the foot of the companionway until you bring him out of his stateroom. He's a desperate man, for all that he looks so meek in general, and I don't want to have a fight here. It isn't necessary, and I always like to do my work in a quiet way—when I can."

"What shall I say he is wanted for?" asked Lawton, hesitating.

"Tell him he has to sign a declaration for the customs department. Be sure you don't give him a hint that there is anything wrong."

"I'm not afraid of him," snapped the captain.

"Of course you're not. I don't mean that he would hurt you—or me, either. But he might have a gun handy, and send a bullet through his own head. That's all."

"I'll be careful," promised Lawton, as he went to the door of the stateroom and knocked.

Sawyer was behind the sailcloth curtain that protected the saloon from the wind in bad weather, but he could see everything done from a narrow chink.

The door of the stateroom was flung open, and Paul Clayton stood in the opening, his figure silhouetted against the light that streamed through the porthole behind him.

"Custom officer on board, Mr. Miles," announced the captain gruffly. "You'll have to declare any baggage you have. They are particular here in San Juan."

"I don't see why," objected Clayton. "We have come from one American port to another, and have not touched anywhere. It seems strange to me."

"It's the regular thing. That's all I know. I'll call the custom officer. He'll come down to see you."

Paul Clayton turned back into his little cabin, and cast a rather anxious glance at the suit case on a chair at the back.

"Very well!" he said, at last. "I'll stay right here till he comes."

Captain Bill Lawton went to the companionway, and, as he ascended, he whispered to the officer from police headquarters:

"There's your man. I'm going on deck."

"All right!"

For a minute—or a fraction of one—during which the still-puzzled skipper ascended to the deck, Sawyer stood behind the sailcloth portière. Then he swung out and strode down the saloon with an official step that no one could mistake.

He stopped opposite Clayton and looked him steadily in the eye. Placing a hand on the young man's shoulder, he said coldly:

"Paul Clayton! That is your name?"

"Yes."

"I am from police headquarters, New York. You are under arrest."

CHAPTER III.

A POINT FOR THE ARCHCROOK.

For the merest part of a second Paul Clayton neither moved nor spoke. Then his hand shot down to a side pocket and came up with a heavy revolver.

The officer had been looking for some such move. He seized the young man's wrist and gave it a wrench that caused the weapon to fall clattering to the floor.

"That won't help you," was the quiet warning. "Don't resist, because you will be the person to suffer if you do."

"What am I arrested for?" asked Clayton, composing himself with a tremendous effort.

"Stealing jewels estimated at about eighty thousand dollars from Mr. Stephen Reed, of New York City. He is said to be your uncle. We think we have the goods on you, too."

Paul Clayton dropped his head despairingly. To think that, just when he had been so sure that he could return to his uncle the jewels he knew now he never had meant to keep, and begin life anew, with no stain on his name, he had to be arrested by this strange detective, who had followed him all this way, and seemed to have got to San Juan before him!

"Very well!" he sighed. "I'll go with you quietly. There is nothing else I can do. I only want to say that Mr. Reed would have had all his property back as soon as it could reach him by express, and that there would have been no need for this arrest."

"I guess so!" remarked the detective, with an incredulous shrug. "But I caution you that anything you say may be used against you at your trial. My advice to you is not to talk."

"I have been a fool, I know," went on Clayton, seemingly unable to keep his tongue quiet. "But I meant to make good."

"Be careful."

"I am careful. I have nothing to hide. The suit case holding the property is over on that chair, in my cabin. On the table is a letter I have written to Mr. Reed, and which would have been mailed as soon as I could get ashore. You can read it, and it will convince you that I have been telling the truth."

"You'd better tell that to the judge," interrupted the officer.

"I want to tell it to you. I wish you'd look at that letter."

"It isn't necessary. Hold out your hands."

In another second the handcuffs were clapped on the wrists of Paul Clayton.

For the first time in his life he was a manacled prisoner. A dry sob broke from his throat.

It was then, as the officer stepped behind him and placed a hand on the precious suit case, that a curious change came over the face of the man from headquarters.

He bent over the suit case and a grin widened his mouth in so extraordinary a way that, if anybody who knew him had seen him at that instant, he would have declared that this detective lieutenant from New York was none other than John Garrison Rayne, the Apache!

"This is dead easy!" he muttered. "And it's good that Nick Carter has gone off the ship. I'll take these few things from my innocent young friend here, and he can get the handcuffs off when Carter comes back."

How the scoundrel had contrived to get hold of the semiofficial uniform he wore in so short a time was his own secret.

It need only be said that when a man has six hundred dollars in cash in his pocket, he can get most things he wants, up to the value of his pile, in San Juan, just as he can in any other busy center.

At all events, here was John Garrison Rayne on the *Cherokee*, in the guise of a detective, seemingly carrying everything before him.

He had completely fooled Captain Bill Lawton, and Paul Clayton had not the least suspicion that he was anything but what he pretended to be.

"You will remain in this cabin a prisoner for the present," he said shortly, turning to Clayton. "I shall have to go ashore and telegraph to New York for instructions. Ah, here's Captain Lawton!"

The skipper was coming down the companionway. He raised his eyebrows as he saw that Paul Clayton was standing at the stateroom door, with handcuffs on his wrists.

"Nabbed him, eh?" he growled.

"I have him under arrest," replied Rayne, with dignity. "If you will bring a couple of your men to guard the prisoner, I will stay till you come back."

"All right! I'll get my bos'n, Clegg, and another man," replied the captain. "Clegg is the sort of fellow who won't take any funny business from anybody. With him and another, your prisoner will be as safe as if he was in jail ashore."

The captain hurried away to get Clegg—who, in the absence of Joe Sykes, was acting as bos'n. He was glad to do anything he could to help the officer from New York.

John Garrison Rayne watched the captain till he disappeared up the stairway. Then he stooped and picked up the revolver Clayton had dropped, putting it into his pocket.

The young man had fallen into a chair at the big table in the middle of the saloon, and was sitting there, his head resting upon his arms, the picture of despair.

The Apache strode deliberately into the stateroom—for he was afraid to hurry or show any eagerness, lest he should be suspected—and picked up the suit case.

As he brought it to the table, he was surprised to find that it was not locked.

He opened it and turned out its contents upon the table as if they had been a heap of pebbles. It was his way of showing that he regarded the booty from a purely official point of view.

Paul Clayton did not look up. He seemed to have lost interest in everything in the world just then.

Rayne had seen the jewels before. But he could not keep the glint out of his eyes as they fell upon the glittering stones and gold settings which would mean a fortune to him.

He had been at his last gasp financially when he had come on board the old tramp steamer. He had had enough to pay his fare and provide himself with cigars,

and that was about all. He felt that he must make a killing now, no matter at what risk.

It was just as Rayne had the jewels spread out on the table that Captain Bill Lawton came down again. His eyes fell upon the display, and he could not get his breath.

The genial skipper did not know much about the value of gems and richly chased gold ornaments. But he felt sure this heap must be worth a great deal of money. He found himself regretting that he had not known what this young man had in his cabin.

How easy it would have been for the captain to get hold of the suit case, empty it into a bag of his own, and go ashore, saying good-by to the sea forever!

Captain Lawton might not have been guilty of this bit of villainy, even if he had had the opportunity. But certainly he allowed his thoughts to roam in this way, while a ruminative smile moved his hard lips.

John Garrison Rayne, familiar with the look of cupidity that steals over the faces of some men, divined pretty well what was passing in Captain Lawton's mind. He brought the commander to himself sharply, by remarking, in a matter-of-fact tone:

"This stuff seems to be all right. I don't see that anything is missing. But I'll have to compare them with my list before I can be sure."

He shoveled the jewelry back into the suit case as if he had no personal interest in the valuables, and shut the case with a snap.

"You will have two men to guard my prisoner, Captain Lawton," he said shortly. "I shall have to hold you responsible for his safe-keeping. But I am not afraid that he will get away. I don't see how he can, so long as he is kept down here. He couldn't get out of any of the portholes."

"He won't get away!" grunted Captain Lawton. "I'll answer for that."

"All right! You'll be paid for any trouble you have to take, of course. I'll take this stuff ashore to my hotel, and keep it until I get instructions from New York."

"I'll be glad to see it off my ship," declared Captain Lawton. "If you like, I'll send a couple of men ashore with you, to help you guard the stuff till you put it away. I suppose you'll stow it in the hotel safe."

"Yes," answered Rayne carelessly. "That will be the best place for it. Meantime, I can look after it myself. You will hear from me some time during the day."

He took the suit case in his hand, and, with a grim smile under his heavy mustache, walked to the companionway and up to the deck.

His impulse was to make a rush for his boat. But the Apache had too much control of himself to yield to such an inclination. Instead, he sauntered over to the head of the sea ladder and shouted to his two oarsmen.

"Aye, aye, sir!" responded one of them, as they brought the craft up to the small platform at the foot of the ladder. "All right, sir!"

With a slow and dignified step, John Garrison Rayne went down the ladder. At the foot of it he stopped to wave a farewell to Captain Lawton, who, with his first mate, Van Cross, was at the top. Then he stepped into his boat and sat down in the stern, the valuable suit case between his knees.

No sooner had the men got the boat clear of the steamer than Rayne leaned forward and told them to hurry with all their might.

"It will be half a dollar extra for each of you if you put me ashore inside of fifteen minutes," he told them. "I have to meet a gentleman who is going away on the train. Hurry!"

"Aye, aye, sir!" came in chorus from both of the oarsmen.

The promise of a tip has just as potent an effect in Porto Rico as it has in any other part of the world. They rowed with savage eagerness, and promised to get to shore in twelve minutes.

As the yawl cut its way through the heaving waters, John Garrison Rayne mused over his good luck. He hugged the suit case between his knees, and tried to decide on his next move.

"It was dead easy!" he muttered. "All I had to do was to get rid of that gray wig, put on the mustache, and buy the clothes I wanted out of the captain's six hundred. Then I stepped into this boat, went up to the *Cherokee*, clapped handcuffs on Paul Clayton, picked up the suit case—after making sure it had the things in it—and quietly rowed away. Why, it was like taking candy from a baby."

He chuckled so loudly that both of his oarsmen looked quickly at him in astonishment. He recovered himself immediately, and frowning severely at them, told them to pull harder.

It was just as he administered this rebuke to his men that he glanced over to the left, where a motor boat was chugging its way across the harbor.

There were three men in it.

At first they were too far away for him to make out who they were. Then, as the morning sun fell full upon their faces, he recognized them.

They were Nick Carter, Chick, and Patsy Garvan!

The motor boat swept past, causing the yawl to rock violently in its back wash.

Rayne bent over and appeared to be tying the lace of his shoe. His face was thus entirely concealed from the occupants of the motor boat.

When the danger of recognition was past, he hissed to his two perspiring oarsmen:

"Make it in eight minutes, and I'll give you a dollar apiece!"

The little yawl fairly leaped through the water, as the men put in all the strength and activity they could muster.

"They're going to the ship," muttered Rayne. "I've got to be out of the way quickly. There may be a way of signaling shore. If there is anything like that to be done, that infernal Nick Carter will know how to do it."

CHAPTER IV.

A PUZZLE FOR THE SKIPPER.

It was not without thoroughly understanding the situation that John Garrison Rayne told himself he would be in danger if he did not get away before Nick Carter could communicate with the shore.

Even if it should be impossible to telegraph, that motor boat was a swift-moving craft, and it would take very little time for it to get to the wharf from the *Cherokee*, if the famous detective should determine to go, instead of trying to signal.

It happened that Rayne was just stepping on the quay as the motor boat swirled alongside of the steamer.

Nick Carter, no longer dressed as a sailor, but in a neat, light, business suit, stepped upon the platform at the foot of the sea ladder, while his two assistants—who also had changed their attire—followed him closely.

Nick had removed the heavy beard he had worn as Joe Sykes, the boatswain, and there was little in his face to remind one of the sailor except his penetrating dark eyes.

Patsy and Chick, too, had changed their faces, so that no one on board the steamer would be likely to suspect that they ever had been members of the crew, taking the hard work, and the equally hard language of the bullying mate, all as part of the day's work.

Captain Lawton was worried over the taking away of the suit case. He had begun to feel misgivings, and it had disturbed his nerves. So he scowled when he saw three strangers boarding his ship.

"What do you want?" was his inhospitable greeting, as Nick gained the top of the ladder.

"I am a detective, and I've come to see your passenger, Paul Clayton," replied Nick Carter, as he looked the skipper up and down. "He took passage with you under the name of Miles. Where is he?"

"Search me," grinned the captain.

"He's on board your vessel, isn't he?" demanded Nick sternly. "A passenger of yours?"

"No. He ain't nothing of the kind. You say you're a detective. Well, you're a little late. Another detective, from New York, has been here and arrested him. So he isn't a passenger. He's a prisoner."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Nick Carter.

"Nothing impossible about it," sneered the captain. "He's down in the cabin he's had since we left New York. Only now it's a cell, instead of a stateroom, and I have two of my men watching to see that he doesn't get away. That's all there is to it."

"How do you know this man who arrested Paul Clayton—or Miles—is a detective?"

The captain held out a card, which Nick Carter took and scanned hastily.

"Detective Lieutenant Sawyer!" murmured Nick, reading from the card. "I don't know of any New York detective by that name."

"Well, anyhow, he was here, and he's gone ashore with the stolen property, in a suit case. If you look over there, you can just make him out, landing on the wharf from a yawl."

"Gee!" whispered Patsy. "I believe that's right. Eh, Chick?"

"Looks like his walk," returned Chick.

"I wish we could make out his face. What kind of clothes do you suppose he has on? We're going to have a fine time running him down," was Patsy's low-toned remark—in which there was plenty of confidence, however.

Nick Carter was thinking quickly. He had seen the man getting out of the rowboat at the wharf. But it was too far to make him out for certain, and Nick had very little faith in Captain Lawton's integrity.

"I'll go down and see the prisoner, anyhow," he said sharply.

"I don't know whether you can," hesitated Captain Lawton. "I have orders to keep the man safe, but nothing was said to me about allowing any one to see him."

Nick Carter turned back the lapel of his waistcoat and showed a jeweled badge. It was very seldom that he exhibited this insignia. But there were occasionally times, like the present, when it was desirable that he should prove his identity.

Captain Lawton leaned forward to scan the badge. He saw that it bore the arms of New York State, and that in the center was a medallion portrait of the man who wore it.

But the skipper was naturally suspicious, and he did not accept even this proof immediately—or pretended he did not. As a matter of fact, he had seen Nick Carter before, in his proper person, and he was obliged to admit to himself that this calm, self-possessed man seemed to be the same.

"If that badge is straight, it is all right," he growled. "Only I do not know that."

"Here's my card," said Nick impatiently, as he took one of his cards from its case. "You may see my name and address there."

"'Nicholas Carter, Madison Avenue, New York City,'" read the captain. "It looks as if you might be the man you say you are."

"You say that this other man, who pretended he was a detective, has taken the jewels stolen from Stephen Reed, and that it was he we just now saw climbing out of a small boat at the wharf?" demanded Nick, who was tired of arguing about his own identity.

"He took the jewelry," replied Lawton, more surly than ever. "I have not had proof that he was a fake detective any more than I know you're a real one."

"We'll prove who I am by the chief of police of San Juan," interrupted Nick sharply. "But there is no time to argue longer about that. I'll send my men ashore, and I dare say they will round up this man. He seems to have fooled you completely."

"There ain't nobody can fool me!" grunted the captain indignantly.

"Chick!" called out Nick, turning his back on the wrathful Lawton. "You and Patsy go and see the chief of police, give him my compliments, and tell him to look out for this man. Most likely the rascal will try to get out of town right away."

"Who are we to look for?" asked Chick.

"The Apache."

"Who's that?" asked the captain.

"Gee! You don't want to get in his way. That's all!" grinned Patsy. "He'd steal the ship from under you while you was giving orders to stop him."

Patsy said this with so much earnestness, even though he grinned, that Captain Lawton was visibly impressed, while Nick Carter frowned at his irrepressible assistant.

"You don't want me to tell the chief of police why we want the Apache, do you?" whispered Chick in Nick Carter's ear.

"No. Let him think it is a smuggling case. Anyhow, he won't ask too many questions if you tell him it is my case. He knows me."

"What's his name? Douglas, isn't it?"

"Yes. He knows you, as well as me."

By this time Captain Lawton had come to the conclusion that it was the real Nick Carter who stood before him, and he desired to give so eminent a crime detector all the aid he could. But it never entered his head that this well-groomed man could be the sloppy-looking Joe Sykes, who had sailed in the *Cherokee* as a boatswain.

"This man who took the jewelry was about the same height as yourself, Mr. Carter," he volunteered. "He wore a blue suit of clothes, that didn't fit any too well, and his cap had a gold band around it, as if he might be an officer of some kind."

"Thank you," responded Nick. "I dare say we shall get him before we are much older. But we'll talk more about that after I've got my men here away."

"All right, Mr. Carter! Anything you say."

"Look here, Chick!"

"Well, chief?"

"When you have finished your work—seen the chief of police, and made any inquiries you can, come to the Ionic Hotel. I'll go there when I get through on the ship. Now hustle, boys!"

"All right!" grinned Patsy. "We'll round up this citizen we're after before he knows whether he's afloat or ashore. Eh, Chick?"

"We'll do our best," was Chick's earnest response.

The two assistants went down the ladder, and Nick Carter leaned over the side of the steamer, watching them make good time to the shore.

Even when the motor boat had almost covered the expanse of water between the *Cherokee* and the wharf, the detective remained in the same position. He was reflecting. He had the faculty of being able to do that anywhere, even with all kinds of confusion around him.

The new complication of the theft of the Stephen Reed jewelry just when it seemed as if the troubles of Paul Clayton might be over, was bad enough. But the added fact that the Apache was posing as a detective, and might even get the police to help him, unwittingly, to get away, made it worse.

Nick had gone ashore originally to look for Rayne, but had not been able to hear anything about a man answering the description of the cunning rascal. Then he had decided that he could do more effective work in behalf of Paul Clayton by dropping his disguise of Joe Sykes and cutting off all connection with the *Cherokee* as a member of its crew.

There would be nothing gained by continuing on board as a boatswain, with Captain Lawton and Van Cross giving him orders. Neither was it desirable that Chick and Patsy should be sailors, either.

Having come to this decision, it had not been difficult for all three to get rid of their make-ups, and so well did they accomplish this that Captain Lawton had not the slightest suspicion they ever had been on his ship before.

"Do you want to see the prisoner, Mr. Carter?" asked the captain, in a tone of respect that was rather amusing, considering how surly and insolent he had been at first.

"Yes. Take me to him, please," answered Nick. "And I should be glad if you will have a boat ready to put me ashore when I have looked over things below."

"Sure you shall have a boat," assented the captain promptly.

CHAPTER V.

NICK HAS HIS OWN WAY.

Two men were guarding the top of the companionway during the colloquy between Nick Carter and the captain, but, at a signal from the latter, they drew aside to allow the detective to go down to the prisoner.

The man at the cabin door opened it as Nick Carter stepped forward, for he knew the detective could not have got below without special permission from the captain. Besides, he had heard enough of the argument on deck to know pretty nearly all that had taken place.

Paul Clayton was sitting on the edge of his berth, his chin on his breast, and evidently in deep thought. He looked up sharply as Nick Carter went into the cabin, a question in his glance.

Instinctively, he made an effort to hide the handcuffs under a blanket on the berth. Then he laughed bitterly and brought his hands forward to rest on his knees, as if defying the opinion of his visitor, whatever it might be.

"I beg your pardon," said Nick, with a smile. "I don't suppose you want to wear these decorations any longer than you are obliged. Let me see if I can take them off."

Paul Clayton stared hard at the detective. He did not know him, now that he had removed the clothing and beard of Joe Sykes, the boatswain. But it seemed as if there were a familiar note in his voice.

"May I ask——" he began.

"Not just now," interrupted Nick. "Let me look at these bracelets of yours."

One close look at the handcuffs was enough for Nick Carter.

Taking from his pocket a jackknife, he pressed a spring, and a steel rod shot forth. With this he opened the handcuffs so quickly and easily that the sailor at the door, who had been watching him, gave vent to an involuntary grunt of admiration."

"I'm responsible for this," remarked Nick, looking at the sailor. "Captain Lawton will tell you."

"Aye, aye, sir!" returned the man, as he moved away from the door.

"Now we can talk more comfortably," was the detective's smiling suggestion. "No sense in wearing those things that I can see."

"Who are you?" faltered Paul Clayton.

"You ought to know me," returned Nick lightly. "We sailed from New York together."

He said this with the drawl he had used as Joe Sykes, and Clayton started up from the bunk in astonishment.

"The bos'n?"

"Exactly! But, when I use my own name, I am Nicholas Carter."

"The detective?"

"Yes. But you need not speak so loudly. Don't let us talk about that."

"But," protested Clayton, "this is amazing."

"Never mind. Tell me what this man said who came and got the jewelry away from you."

"The New York detective?"

"Yes."

Paul Clayton—still wondering, as he looked at his visitor—went over in detail all that had passed between him and John Garrison Rayne.

Nick Carter compressed his lips and his brows came together over his eyes as he listened.

"What a scoundrel the fellow is!" was the detective's comment at the end. "Well, Clayton, that means that we have to go after him."

Clayton got to his feet and seemed eager to move out of the cabin without delay.

"To think that I was so easily cheated of the jewels I stole——"

"Not that you stole, Mr. Clayton," interrupted Nick. "Let us say 'the jewels you were minding for Mr. Reed.' That sounds much better, and it is the truth, isn't it?"

"Yes, indeed it is," assented the young man, with a wan smile of gratitude. "I took the jewelry. But I did not use any of it, and when I had got over the first madness that made me take it from my uncle's room, I never had a thought but to return it as soon as possible."

"But you came to Porto Rico to do it?"

"Because I was afraid that, if I sent the jewels back from New York, Stephen Reed would put the police on my heels. I did want a chance to begin life over again and prove that I am honest at heart," replied Clayton pathetically. "If I were once sent to prison, I never could hold up my head again."

"Well, we will get the jewelry, and back it will go to Mr. Reed. It may be some little trouble, but I believe I can rely on you to keep at it till we round up this blackguard who has tried to fool us all."

"You are quite sure this detective was not really a detective," asked Clayton. "He did not look to me at all like the man I knew as James Boris on this ship."

"Nevertheless, he is the same. He took the name of James Boris on this vessel. He is John Garrison Rayne, the Apache. I *know* that."

"If there were any mistake, and he really represented the police, he would have me arrested——"

"My dear Clayton!" interrupted Nick. "Why will you harp on that? You and I both know that we had him a prisoner on this ship, after taking the suit case away from him in the engine room. Then he managed to get free and dive overboard."

"I suppose it was this Boris who fell or jumped off the ship in the early morning," murmured Paul.

"Beyond all question. He swam to shore, got a new suit of clothes, altered the look of his face, and came back, in the guise of a detective, to steal the jewelry for the second time. There is only one man I know of who could carry out such a trick successfully, and that is the man I am going to find—John Garrison Rayne—the fellow you know as James Boris."

"Can I go with you? Or shall I have to stay here?" asked Clayton. "Remember, you found me a handcuffed prisoner, and the captain promised that I should not get away."

"I'll attend to that," replied Nick briefly. "Come with me."

The sailor who had been at the door of the cabin was on the companionway, talking to the two men at the top, one of whom was Clegg, the boatswain. He was telling of what had happened in Paul Clayton's stateroom.

"I don't know anything about it," rumbled Clegg. "But there's Captain Lawton. We can ask him."

It was at this moment that Nick Carter pushed Clayton ahead of him up the stairs, and led him to the deck.

Clegg stepped aside involuntarily before Nick Carter's masterful manner, although not without glancing at the captain, to see what he would do in such a strange situation.

"Is the boat ready?" asked Nick, stepping up to Lawton.

"I'll have it ready in a brace of shakes."

The captain turned to give an order to Clegg, who passed it forward, and the activity of half a dozen sailors gave promise that the boat would be at the ladder in a few moments.

"I am going ashore—with Mr.—er—Miles," announced Nick carelessly.

"Well, I don't know about that," hesitated the captain. "I don't feel as if this passenger ought to go without something more being known about him. I believe you are really Nicholas Carter, and that the other detective is a fraud. Still, if he should turn out to be the genuine article, where would I be?"

"He is not the genuine article," returned Nick. "So you need not speculate on that."

"But, if he *should* be, you see, I'd be on the rocks—piled up, with my back broke and out of the game for good."

Captain Lawton shook his head with an air of ponderous wisdom that tried Nick Carter's patience sorely.

"You have my word that he's a fraud," the detective reminded him sternly. "I thought that would be enough. If you like, I'll sign a paper taking all the responsibility. Only, let's have that boat!"

"Well, all right! Let it go at that!" grumbled the captain; "I guess I'm going to get the worst of it. I always do. Boat, there!"

He bellowed this last at his men, and Nick Carter went down the ladder, with Paul Clayton following him into the boat.

Four sailors rowed them to shore, and it seemed to the detective as if they were trying to move as lazily as they possibly could.

"Pity they don't hurry!" broke out Clayton impatiently.

"It wouldn't do any good," returned Nick. "Our man has got a good start, and a few minutes more or less in crossing the harbor won't make much difference. When we get ashore we can hustle. Meanwhile, we shall have to take it philosophically."

The boat trip was over at last, and Nick Carter, who was familiar with the beautiful city of San Juan, walked with Paul Clayton along the shaded avenues until he got to the Ionic Hotel.

Situated on the side of a hill, and overlooking the harbor, the hotel was a favorite stopping place for visitors, and one could be sure of hearing most of the gossip of Porto Rico if he lounged about the lobby for an hour or so.

This was one of the reasons that Nick Carter had taken up his abode there. Another was that he knew John Garrison Rayne's love of luxury, and he felt pretty sure that the Apache would be at the Ionic if he thought it safe.

"It ought to be easy to catch him, I should think," observed Paul Clayton, as Nick Carter said this.

"Can't tell," answered the detective. "I have had deal-

ings with this scoundrel before, and he is as cunning as a rat. However, we'll go into the grill room and have a good meal, anyhow. I expect my two men here soon."

The anticipation of the detective proved to be correct. He and Paul Clayton had not yet begun on the luncheon Nick Carter had ordered, when his quick eye made out Chick and Patsy strolling along the big lobby, looking in every direction, but in a careless way that disarmed suspicion.

Suddenly Chick caught sight of his chief, and whispered to Patsy to stay behind for a moment or two.

"All right, Chick!" responded Patsy. "I see what you mean. There's the chief over there. You go slowly to him, and I'll join you afterward."

These precautions were rather elaborate, perhaps. But the two assistants knew that they were dealing with a dangerous man in Rayne, and that he was quite likely to have some spies at work in the hotel, even if he should not be there himself."

"What do you know?" asked Nick casually, as he bent over his plate, when Chick and Patsy were both seated at the table. "Have some luncheon and answer me cautiously."

"We haven't found out a thing," acknowledged Chick.

"Haven't seen or heard anything about him," added Patsy.

"Exactly! Just what I expected," returned Nick Carter coolly. "Let me help you to some salad, Mr. Clayton."

The detective did the honors of the table with as calm and smiling an air as if there were not a thing on his mind. But his brain was working busily.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW NICK GOT A LIGHT.

It was two days later. Nick Carter, his two assistants, and Paul Clayton were in the bedroom of Nick in the Ionic Hotel.

All four looked perplexed and disgusted. Patsy Garvan, who was standing at the window, gazing moodily across the harbor, indulged in various expletives in an undertone, and wished he had somebody whose head it would be permissible to punch.

"If I don't get a chance to lick somebody soon," he muttered, "I'll get a cramp in my elbow. This case is the kind of thing that makes a man go stale. Gee! To think that a dub like John Garrison Rayne can keep out of our way on an island that you can almost spit across! Jumping cats! I'd rather go out and——"

"Patsy!"

It was the voice of Nick Carter. Garvan swung around.

"What is it, chief? Anything I can do?"

"Only stop your growling over there," answered the detective, good-humoredly. "It's got on your nerves, I dare say. But so it has on those of the rest of us. Grumbling and complaining never moved even a pebble out of the road yet. Brace up, and let's talk about it in a sensible way."

Nick Carter was not obliged to mollify his younger assistant in this way. A gruff order would have quieted Patsy Garvan just as effectively. But it was a principle with the eminent detective to make his subordinates feel that they were his partners, rather than just his employees, and he had found that it paid.

"We've been pretty nearly all over Porto Rico, looking for this fellow," returned Patsy. "I was thinking we might as well try somewhere else."

"We've only looked through San Juan," corrected Chick. "Even in a city of some fifty thousand people, it is not easy to get into every nook and cranny. Besides, there isn't any doubt that Rayne has changed his appearance since he left the *Cherokee*."

Nick Carter nodded approvingly.

"That is as certain as that he stole that suit case," he declared. "It is possible that we pass him several times a day without knowing him."

"Oh, chief! Come off!" exclaimed Patsy. "That couldn't be. I never saw the make-up that would fool you."

"That's because you don't know," rejoined Nick Carter. "Don't think you or I know it all, Patsy. The men who do things are those who think they may still learn. What you all need now is a little rest."

"That's so!" yawned Chick. "We are about all in, it seems to me. Still, if there is anything we can do, we ought not to waste time resting."

Nick Carter smiled and slapped Chick on the back, in appreciation of his pluck, as he answered:

"Go to bed, Chick. And you, Patsy. It won't be dark for another hour. But you are so tired that you need not wait for that."

"And what about yourself?" asked Patsy. "Are you going to sit up?"

"Indeed I'm not," was the quick reply. "I'm going to tumble into this bed as soon as you get out."

"There doesn't seem anything for me to do to-night, either," remarked Paul Clayton. "But I do not feel as if I ought to sleep until I have got back the Stephen Reed jewelry."

"That may be a matter of days—or weeks—yet, Clayton," the detective warned him. "You must try to forget it sometimes."

"How can I?" was the dejected response. "If I had never touched it, nothing of this would have happened. I am the person responsible, and it is I who must make good."

For three hours all four of the men who were trying to hunt down John Garrison Rayne lay quietly in their respective bedrooms in the Ionic Hotel.

Nick Carter was the only one of the three who did not undress entirely. He contented himself with removing part of his clothing and taking off his shoes.

Lying on the outside of the bed, he slept as soundly as any of his associates.

It was about eleven o'clock when he awoke. Immediately he sat up, with all his faculties about him.

The famous detective had long before trained himself to wake at the very instant he desired, without any outside help. When he lay down he impressed it on his mind that he must arouse at a certain time. Never yet had he failed to do so.

So, when he woke up now in the darkness, he knew, before he turned his pocket flash lamp on his watch, what the time would be.

Pulling down the window shade in the darkness, he switched on two electric lights at the dresser and smiled at his own reflection.

"I'll have to change this a little," he muttered. "Just

a gray mustache and goatee, with a few lines on my face, will make me safe. My clothes will do, I think."

Porto Rico is one of the most healthful climates on the American side of the world. The mean temperature in San Juan is officially a little over eighty degrees, and it never goes above ninety-five at any time. So the costume worn by Nick Carter was a business suit of light cloth, such as might be suitable for New York or Chicago in the summer.

The detective was careful in making up his face to represent a man in his sixties.

Crow's-feet at the corners of his eyes, a deep line on either side from the nose to the corner of the mouth, and gray brows, as well as mustache and beard, made him look the part.

He topped it off by adjusting a well-made gray wig, which fitted so well that it appeared actually to grow on his head.

When he put on his broad-brimmed panama hat, so that it shaded his eyes, he was a typical Porto Rican, and nothing at all like the Nick Carter familiar to so many people in New York.

He moved about very quietly, for he did not want to disturb either of his assistants, who occupied a double-bedded room adjoining his own.

When he was ready to depart, he listened, for an instant, at the communicating door. Then, satisfied that nobody was stirring within, he went down the stairs to the office of the hotel, and out to the beautiful, verdure-scented avenue.

He had gone two blocks along the avenue on which the hotel stood, and was turning a corner, when he noticed two persons walking slowly along the other side, shadowed by the trees.

"Taking an evening stroll for their health, I reckon," he thought.

He turned to see what had become of them when he had gone down the side street some distance. As they were not in sight, he decided that they had kept along the main avenue, to enjoy the breeze from the sea that swept gustily across the thoroughfare at intervals.

In all cities, no matter how well regulated, there are drinking resorts that have not the entire approval of the police.

It was into one of these that Nick Carter stepped at last. The place was not far from the water front, but the patrons were not of the rough class one so often finds in saloons near the wharves in larger cities. It is doubtful whether they were so good at heart, however.

There was a porch in front of the place. Several men were sitting there, lazily tilted back in their chairs, with cigarettes in their teeth and a cool drink at their elbows on the small tables.

Nick seated himself on the porch, and told the waiter to bring him a lemonade.

In the absence of the serving man to get the drink, Nick looked about him casually.

The half dozen men on the porch beside himself all appeared to be giving themselves up to the enjoyment of the hour. Tobacco and drinks kept them mildly amused, it seemed.

Every lounger looked as if he might be in fairly comfortable circumstances. The detective put them down as storekeepers, mechanics—cigarmakers, probably—and men connected with the shipping of the harbor.

Next to him was a dark-complexioned individual, who looked like a Cuban, with a mixture of West Indian negro blood. Such persons are rather frequent in Porto Rico.

He was dressed in a linen suit, with a panama hat and white shoes. There was a diamond ring on one of his brown fingers, and another diamond sparkled in the bosom of his narrow-plaited, soft, white shirt bosom. Prosperity oozed from him.

He had just lighted a long cigar as Nick Carter sat down by his side.

The Cuban did not look up. As he smoked, he seemed to have enough affairs of his own to occupy his mind, without wasting any time on a stranger.

Nick Carter took one of his own favorite perfectos from a cigar case and bit off the end with a snap of his even, white teeth. Then he felt in his pockets for a match.

He brought out a silver match box first, and, finding it empty, explored his clothing with what appeared to be rapidly increasing vexation. Not a match could he find.

He looked on the tables, but no matches were there.

"Deuce take it! I wish I had a match!" he muttered, in a carefully disguised tone. "Where's that confounded waiter?"

The Cuban turned and looked Nick Carter over with a gaze that took him in from head to foot. Then, moved by a sudden impulse, he said, in a voice with a strong Spanish accent:

"May I give you a light?"

"Thanks!" answered Nick.

"I am sorry I have no match,'" went on the Cuban. "Will you honor me by taking a light from my cigarro?"

"If you will favor me."

The little dialogue had been carried on with the punctilious politeness that usually distinguishes the intercourse of Latin peoples.

The detective fell easily into it, while to the Cuban it appeared to be entirely natural.

Both men arose from their chairs, and the Cuban drew up his cigar with several strong inhalations. Then he bowed, as a signal that he was ready.

Nick Carter stepped in front of him, and, while the Cuban held his cigar between his teeth, the detective, perfecto in mouth, came close.

"Now!" smiled the Cuban.

"Thanks!"

"I'll draw up a little more."

"All right! I can get it," replied Nick.

With the ends of their cigars touching, as the detective drew some of the fire from the Cuban's to his own, the two men stared directly into each other's eyes.

The glow of the cigars lighted up their faces, and each had an opportunity to study the other at very close range.

Somehow, it was difficult for Nick Carter to get his cigar alight. Once, when he thought he had it, he was obliged to go back again.

The Cuban did not show or express any impatience, however. He seemed to be desirous only to oblige his casual acquaintance.

For more than half a minute they stood with their faces only the combined length of the two cigars apart—that is to say, about six inches.

Then, as Nick Carter slowly drew back, his cigar burning brightly, he suddenly shot out both hands and gripped the Cuban by the shoulders!

"What does this mean?" hissed the dark-visaged stranger indignantly.

"Only that I want a little conversation with you, John Garrison Rayne," replied Nick Carter.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SLIPPERY APACHE.

The words were hardly out of the detective's mouth, when the Cuban, with a snarl of rage, tore the cigar from Nick's teeth and pressed the burning end upon the bare hand of his captor.

There were few things that would have made Nick Carter loosen his hold. The exquisite pain of the burning cigar was one of them, however.

Anybody who ever has been hurt in this way can testify that the red-hot ash sticks to the flesh in a cruel fashion, causing excruciating agony.

As Nick took away one hand, John Garrison Rayne pulled the other loose. Then, hissing defiance between his set teeth, he dragged a long knife from inside his coat and aimed a blow at the detective's heart.

Nick Carter was unable to ward off the blow entirely, but it only cut a long slit in his sleeve. The next moment he had seized the rascal around the waist and slammed him down upon the table by his side.

The table never was meant to stand such a shock. Down it went, in a muddle of broken legs and splintered top, with the Cuban and Nick in the ruins, for the Cuban had pulled his assailant down with him.

"Thieves!" roared the Cuban. "Look out! Grab him before he can get away!"

Four big men piled on top of Nick behind, and, under their combined weight, down he went, flat upon the floor, while the cunning rascal, who had incited the attack, slipped away in the darkness.

"Let me get up!" shouted Nick. "The thief has got away."

"Oh, I guess not!" came from one of the men holding him down. "I saw the whole thing. This man asked for a light, and when he had it, he tried to go through the other man's pockets for his roll. Where are the police? This is the worst holdup I ever saw."

"You idiot!" exploded Nick.

He was enraged at seeing Rayne get away when so nearly caught. So, exerting all his enormous strength, he threw the four men off, and, picking up a chair, swung it around his head to hold them back.

By this time there was a full-sized riot on the porch and in the café. But the detective's blood was up, and he cared nothing for that.

It was seldom he allowed his anger to make him lose sight of the main purpose in view. But he was so disgusted with the interference of these men, at such a critical moment, that he was determined to make them pay.

He dropped the chair and shot out his two fists, sending the talkative individual, who had called for the police, one way, and another busy person another.

He was setting himself for an onslaught on three others who were coming toward him, when suddenly two men he had not seen before ranged themselves on his side. They disposed of four of the foes with well-directed blows.

Before Nick could look around to see who his unexpected reinforcements were, Patsy Garvan whispered in his ear:

"Break away, chief! The fellow you knocked down is hustling along the avenue. Let's get after him."

A hand was laid on each of his arms, and, as he was drawn away into the shadows, where the people on the porch could not see him, he found Chick on one side of him and Patsy on the other.

"Do you know who he was?" asked Nick.

"I didn't see," replied Patsy. "I only made out that he was dark, and that he had on light clothes. I'll know him again, though. Come on!"

"Who was he, chief?" asked Chick.

"John Garrison Rayne," replied Nick Carter shortly.

"Wha-at?"

His two assistants delivered themselves of this interrogative monosyllable together, and with enough astonishment to make it seem ten times as strong a word as it was.

"Get after him!" replied Nick, as he hustled along the dark thoroughfare. "He can't have got far."

But if Rayne had not got far, at least he had managed to elude his pursuers on this occasion.

He laughed silently, as, standing in the shadow of a tree, he saw Nick Carter and his two men go past. He watched them till they were out of sight.

"That settles it," he muttered. "I've got to get this coat of chocolate off my face and hands, and tackle something else. It will be a bold thing, but I guess I can put it over. It seems to be about my only chance, for that cursed Carter has every part of the wharf and all the roads guarded. He thinks I don't know, perhaps—but I do."

He walked slowly on until he stood in front of the handsome "palace," which was at one time the residence of the Spanish captain general, but is now the home of the governor.

This building is one of the finest in a city of imposing edifices, and as John Garrison Rayne gazed at it, his busy brain worked with a scheme that, as he had confessed to himself, was decidedly bold, to say the least.

"It is the one best bet for me," he muttered. "It is something that Carter never would suspect, and for that reason I feel sure I can carry it out as smoothly as anything of that kind could be done."

He grinned as he moved away, and the grin was still on his dark face when he reached the obscure house in which he had engaged a room—a house where the people never asked questions so long as the rent was paid promptly.

Once in his bedchamber, he locked the door and made sure the window shade was adjusted so that no glimmer of light could show outside. Then he took from his pockets two bags and emptied their contents upon the bed.

The bags had contained some of the jewelry stolen from Stephen Reed, including a string of magnificent pearls which he prized more than anything else he had. The pearls had been the property of Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Turkey, and were regarded by experts as unique in their beauty.

"If I could only sell those sultan pearls," thought

Rayne. "I should have enough cash to do anything. But I daren't try to work them off in San Juan. I'll have to get along the best way I can on the balance of Captain Lawton's six hundred dollars."

He lighted a cigar—one of the long, slim rolls of tobacco that are so common in Porto Rico—and sat down on the bed to meditate.

"I may as well see that the others are all right," he said, half aloud. "Though, so long as I can feel the package under my clothes, there is no likelihood of anything having happened to them."

He opened the front of his soft shirt and revealed a flat bag, hanging to a string around his neck, and which showed no bulkiness from the outside.

He opened the top of this bag and pulled from it a flat package in tissue paper. This he emptied out on the bed, apart from the other jewels. The paper had contained several unset diamonds.

He sifted these through his fingers for a few moments, his eyes glittering with avaricious triumph. Then he put them back and fastened the bag. As he buttoned the front of the shirt over it, he muttered:

"Eighty thousand dollars, eh? I'm sure I can raise at least a hundred on all these. There are stones worth a great deal more than the price the old man put on them. All I want is to get to some place where I can market them. And that market is New York. Even if I could not turn them into cash there, it is so easy to slip across to Europe. Yes, I must get to New York as quickly as I can. I must."

He restored the Abdul Hamid pearls and the other glittering gewgaws to their two bags and placed them both under the pillow on the bed.

"I'll have a busy, hard day to-morrow," he told himself, with a grin, as he began to undress. "I must get a good sleep to-night. I wonder whether Carter is still looking for me."

He repeated this last sentence as he turned out the lights and got into bed. His thoughts were very much on the detective and his doings.

Nick Carter had got the better of him on more than one occasion, and, in spite of his boastful promise to himself that this was the time when he would win, John Garrison Rayne did not feel any too sure.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN THE SOUNDPROOF ROOM.

It was evening of the day after Nick Carter's encounter with the Cuban whom he had recognized as John Garrison Rayne, and Acting Governor Portersham, who temporarily represented the United States in San Juan, had just finished dinner.

Jabez Portersham was a young man, considering the importance of the office he held, and, as he was a bachelor, he had taken dinner alone. Afterward he had strolled into his library, lighted a cigar, and sat himself down for an hour or two of reading.

The palace, which was the governor's official residence, was well supplied with books, so that it would be easy for Mr. Portersham to find something that would interest him.

He could have gone into the billiard room if he had cared for a game, and a touch of his electric bell would have brought somebody to play with him.

His official family included several bright, companionable men of about his own age, somewhere in the thirties, and very often he had one of the heads of departments to dine with him and spend the evening afterward.

This happened to be an evening when he was disinclined for society, and he was quite alone when he sank into a well-cushioned rocker, with a novel in his hand.

Jabez Portersham had lived in a Middle State, and had been prominent in the affairs of his own city. Also, he had had experience in the government service in Washington. Natural ability, plus some influence, had put him where he was.

He had hardly got well into the first page of his book, when there was a discreet tap at the door, followed by the entrance of a soft-footed butler, who had a card on a salver.

The acting governor took up the card, with a slight frown at being interrupted at this hour of privacy, but with the knowledge that Briggs would not have come unless he had felt sure that he had a sound excuse.

"Senator Micah Garnford" was the name on the card.

Portersham threw his book on the table at his elbow and sat up in his chair, as he told the butler, in a sharp, businesslike tone, to "Show the senator in."

Senator Garnford was an influential man. Portersham had met him only once, and then but for a minute or two, in company with many other people, at a reception at the senator's house in Washington, but he knew that he was largely indebted to Garnford for his present appointment.

It must be urgent business of some sort that had induced the senator to come to the palace at this hour.

The acting governor had not known that he was even in Porto Rico. The last he had heard of Senator Garnford, he was taking an active part in the deliberations of the distinguished body of which he was a member in the Capitol at Washington.

Briggs was not long in bringing the visitor into the library.

Portersham got up and shook hands heartily with the ruddy, white-haired man who came forward with a springy step that was much younger than his appearance.

"Your cigar smells good," laughed the senator. "May I have one?"

He took a cigar from the open humidor on the table, and, as he lighted it by the wax candle that burned beside it, remarked:

"Two things I have a weakness for—a good horse and a good cigar."

Portersham nodded and smiled. He liked the free-and-easy manner of this important lawmaker, and he was glad he had come.

"What about a motor car, senator?" he asked, as his visitor took a chair. "It hasn't knocked out the horse for you altogether, eh?"

"Not in the least," was the positive reply. "You can't pat the neck of a motor car. At least, unless you call the hood its neck. You can pat that, if you like. And, even then, the pesky thing does not acknowledge the caress. Now, a horse——"

At that moment the door clicked behind the retiring Briggs. The noise was slight, but a curious change came over Senator Garnford as he heard it. The smile left

his face, his rather big body seemed to stiffen in his white suit, and his strong, white teeth bit into his cigar.

"No chance of our being overheard in this room, is there?" he asked, in a grave, sharp tone.

"Not the slightest," replied the acting governor. "It was made soundproof when the palace was built. Many a secret meeting was held here in the days of the Spanish sovereignty of San Juan."

"I suppose so. Only right, too."

"I've looked into it since I've been here," went on Portersham. "The walls, ceiling, and floor are lined with felt. You might shoot off a gun in here without its being heard inside."

"Fine!" smiled the senator. "How about the door?"

"That is so thick that a person on the other side could not hear anything—even a very loud noise. The keyhole is blinded, of course, and I can slip the deadlatch with a touch of my finger. See!"

He walked over to the door and touched a spring, which clicked rather loudly in response.

"That makes it safe for anything you might have to say that must not be heard outside—state secrets, I mean?" remarked the senator.

"Yes. You could commit a murder in here without any one knowing it—until the door was broken open."

Portersham said this a little impatiently. He was curious to hear what Senator Micah Garnford had to say to him. It was not often that so important a personage came with a special message from Washington.

"I am glad to know that the room is so well protected," observed the senator. "Just draw a little closer to the table, will you? I want to show you the papers that have brought me all the way from Washington—and at a time when I really ought not to have left the Senate."

He got up from his own chair, as if to move it, and, as Portersham hitched nearer the table, the senator managed to get right behind him.

At the same instant he thrust his hand into an inside pocket.

If the acting governor had chanced to turn, he would have observed that the good-humored expression had entirely left his visitor's face. His lips had drawn down at the corners, while his eyes seemed to narrow and come closer together.

There was a strange ferocity in the whole countenance, curiously at variance with the light and pleasant words with which he had entered the room.

When Senator Garnford's hand came out of his pocket, it did not hold papers. Instead, he brought forth a small bottle and a folded pad of white cloth.

Keeping a wary eye on Portersham, who was trying to get his chair into a convenient position at the table, the senator gently drew the cork from the bottle in his hand.

He placed the pad of cloth over the neck of the bottle and let the contents saturate it through and through.

"What's that?" exclaimed the acting governor, as he began to turn in his chair. "I thought I smelled a strange——"

He did not get any further. Senator Garnford seized him around the throat in an iron grip and pulled his head back.

"Let go!" gasped Portersham. "What the——"

The pad, reeking with the sickly smelling stuff, was jammed over his mouth and nostrils and held there.

The acting governor was a sturdy fellow, and if he had not been taken so entirely by surprise, might have given this steel-muscled senator a hard tussle. As it was, he could only struggle feebly, while vainly endeavoring to shout for help.

Not that it would have done him any good. He had spoken truly when he said that any sort of disturbance might take place in this felt-lined room without its being heard outside.

But it was only natural for him to endeavor to cry out. It was the involuntary act of an animal in extreme peril or pain, when a human being does not reason any more than a dog.

The chloroform worked rapidly. Moreover, the senator had jerked his head against the back of the chair with a force that would have half stunned him, even without the anæsthetic.

Jabez Portersham managed to emit a gurgling cry. But the arm around his throat pressed more tightly, while the fumes of the drug crept upward and gripped his brain.

Vainly the acting governor tried to get out of the chair, with only a vague consciousness of what was happening.

In the few seconds during which he tried to fight off the effect of the deadly, nauseating fumes, he half realized that he actually was being drugged by one of the most prominent men in the United States—one who might have been supposed absolutely incapable of such a crime—or of any crime, for that matter.

That was his last incoherent thought. Then everything became blank to him.

The senator stepped back when he saw that his victim was thoroughly overcome, and an evil grin spread over his face.

"It would be possible to commit a murder in this room without any one knowing it!" he muttered. "If you had known just who Senator Garnford was, my trusting friend, I guess you wouldn't have said that."

He snatched from his face the gray mustache and beard he had worn, and, if Nick Carter had been in the room, he would have known that the real name of this Senator Micah Garnford was none other than John Garrison Rayne, alias the Apache!

CHAPTER IX.

BLUFFING IT THROUGH.

Rayne stood looking steadily into the still face of the acting governor for a few moments, as if studying the features.

"Not a difficult face to make, I think," he muttered.

He stepped lightly across the room to make sure that the door was secure. Inspecting the deadlatch sharply, he decided that it would hold the door against any possible interruption.

"When I get ready to go, I shall have to leave that unfastened," he muttered. "But I dare say I can make it secure enough on the outside to suit my purpose. So long as I make my get-away, I need not care what they do here afterward."

He took off his gray wig, and stuffed it into a pocket, in company with the mustache and beard.

"If I hadn't had so much experience in making up, I should be a little nervous over this thing," he murmured. "As it is, I dare say I can make myself into a Portersham that will pass muster."

From one of his pockets he drew a small leather case, which contained sticks of grease paint in tin foil, with other articles that he might require in making up his face.

First of all, he had to take the Garnford red out of his cheeks. Then he carefully imitated the complexion of the acting governor, being particular to put on two small moles that he observed on the cheek and chin respectively of the unconscious man.

In the course of ten minutes he had almost completely reproduced the features of Jabez Portersham on his own countenance.

Line by line he brought out the contour of the young man's face, with every light wrinkle, every depression, every rounded part, and every turn of expression that was part of the original, no matter how elusive and slight it might be.

The first thing he did was to put on a wig of light hair, so near the hue of Portersham's that it might almost have been made from the original. It had a touch of gray at the temples, which was so exactly like that on the sides of the acting governor's head that it might have deceived his most intimate acquaintance.

"Good!" chuckled Rayne softly. "I'm glad I managed to have a good squint at him on the street to-day. I reckon I'm getting it about as close as any one could hope to do it."

Actors, in making up, always put the wig on first, building up the face afterward, and Rayne did the work in the approved professional way.

When everything seemed to be done, Rayne took a small mirror from his pocket and examined himself critically under the strong, shaded electric light. Then he walked over to a large mirror on the mantel and took a general view.

He was entirely satisfied with himself in the large mirror, as well as in the small one.

The nature of the Apache was so strange, and he had so much vanity in his composition, stern as he was, that just then he thought much more of the skill he had displayed in the art of make-up than of the fortune in gems he was fighting so hard to retain, in the very teeth of the detective who always had overcome him heretofore, Nick Carter.

"I reckon I'm going to show my friend Carter that his luck has changed, so far as I am concerned," he muttered. "If those men of his hadn't turned up at that café last night, I'd have put him in such a condition that he would not have troubled me for a while, anyhow. I'm sorry my knife missed him."

There was a demoniacal snarl on the scoundrel's lips. He was truly sorry that he had not been able to commit a foul murder when he aimed that stroke at the detective. As for compunction, that was a sentiment that never troubled him.

"Well, my face is all right! Now for the clothes."

His tone was businesslike. He might have been engaged in an entirely legitimate task, so far as that was concerned.

"I'll have to hurry," he went on. "There is always the off chance of somebody trying to get into this room. Even if I didn't open the door—which I certainly would not do—that very fact might stir up suspicion. One never knows."

He bent over the supine figure of Jabez Portersham, huddled in the chair, and, deftly as a well-trained valet, took off the acting governor's outer garments, leaving him in his underclothing.

Deliberately, but without any waste of time, he put the suit of clothes on himself, finishing off with the collar and necktie, and wearing the watch and fob that was part of Portersham's ordinary costume.

"By Jove!" he chuckled, as he surveyed himself in the large mirror. "I am Jabez Portersham to the life. I don't think I've overlooked anything. Oh, yes! Here's something."

On the little finger of the unconscious man's left hand was a large diamond solitaire ring.

Rayne slipped it off and put it on his own little finger. It was loose for him, but he decided that it would stay on, and that no one would notice its being a little large.

"These details are important, sometimes," he muttered. "Everybody who knows this chap must have observed the ring. Besides, it is worth about a thousand dollars, I should think. I should be a fool not to take it with me."

Now came the next move, which he had had in mind from the first, and for which he had come fully prepared.

He took from his pockets a coil of thin wire and a small pad of cloth like that with which he had administered the chloroform.

The pad he put in Portersham's mouth, fastening it with a twist of the wire around his head. Then he secured the arms and legs with the wire, making sure that the acting governor would not be able to get free, even if he should come to his senses.

"So far, good!" was his savage comment. "I shall have to put him where he won't be seen too quickly if any one comes in."

It was easy for the athletic Apache to lift the young man from the chair and stow him under the large library table.

"I'll pile up these magazines and papers in front of him. Then he will be masked in. I hope he'll be comfortable under there, too."

He grinned at this brutal jest, and heaped a few more papers under the table, hiding his victim completely.

"With the wires on him, and the dose of dope he has in his system, he will be safe enough for a while," he reflected. "Now I come to the real risk of the job. I'm glad I'm not deficient in nerve."

He looked around him, felt in all the pockets of the clothing he had taken off to make sure he had everything out—including the bags of jewelry—patted his chest to assure himself that the flat bag was in its place under his shirt, and pushed his discarded garments under the table with the senseless Portersham.

"Now for it!" he breathed softly.

He opened the door without any noise and stepped into the hallway. His heart beat a little faster than usual, but he never faltered in what he had set himself to do. Neither did he show in his demeanor what a strain there was upon even his steely nerves.

Briggs was sitting inside a small room off the hall that was his particular domain. The door was open, so that

the butler could see everybody who might pass up and down.

His orders were to make sure no one loafed about the palace unless he had business there.

As a public building, many strangers were in the palace during the day. But in the late afternoon and evening, when official business was suspended for the day, only those living in the house, or authorized visitors, could be permitted to remain.

Briggs jumped to his feet and stood in the hall, waiting for orders, as he saw the supposed acting governor coming along from his room.

Rayne was obliged to grip himself as he came face to face with Briggs. This butler was more than a mere servant. He was expected to take on himself the duties of a detective, and, naturally, he was disposed to be suspicious.

The Apache took the bull by the horns.

"Is my secretary in?" he asked sharply—and his imitation of the tones of Jabez Portersham was marvelous.

"Yes, sir," answered Briggs. "Mr. Morlein is in his office. Shall I send him to you?"

Rayne smiled inwardly. He had not known the name of the private secretary, but he had learned it now, and without difficulty. The game was playing into his hands.

The butler walked a little way down the hallway—it was on the second floor of the building—and was about to knock on a door.

"Never mind!" interrupted Rayne. "I'll go in and see him. You need not knock."

The Apache had found out where Morlein's room was. This, also, was a piece of information that had not been in his possession before. He did not know the way of the palace. In fact, this was the first time he ever had been within its walls.

Again getting a firm grip on his nerves, Rayne opened the door of the secretary's room and walked in with the authoritative manner of a chief visiting a subordinate.

Henry Morlein was a tall, athletic young fellow, whose greeting indicated that he was on very friendly terms with his chief.

His feet were on the edge of his desk, and though he took them down when the supposed acting governor entered, he did it languidly, as if it were not an unusual thing for him to be caught in this careless attitude.

"Hello, chief!" he drawled, as he removed a cigar from his mouth. "I thought you'd gone to the theater. They're doing opera, I'm told—and rather well, at that."

"I was going, but I changed my mind."

Rayne said this carelessly, but he trembled lest his imitation of Jabez Portersham's tones should fail to deceive this wide-awake young man.

He reflected that Henry Morlein was accustomed to the sound of the acting governor's voice every day, and should be able to detect an imitation where many others might fail.

But Morlein did not appear to observe anything unusual in the accent and inflection, and Rayne went on calmly:

"It's just as well that I didn't go. Did you know that Senator Micah Garnford was in to see me a little while ago?"

"Senator Garnford?" ejaculated Morlein, in surprise.

"Why, I thought he was in Washington. Seems to me I was reading in the paper that he made a great speech on the tariff the day before yesterday."

"That was last week," declared Rayne. "He's in San Juan now. Do you know the senator personally, Morlein?"

"Never saw him in my life," was the prompt reply. "I never even saw his picture. Rather a fine man, I've been told."

"I think so. But that isn't the point. I've got to go to Washington right away—on official business."

Henry Morlein threw the end of his cigar into a cuspidor and looked up in astonishment.

"Geewhillikins! That's sudden, isn't it?"

"Government business is often sudden, Morlein," replied Rayne gravely. "I wish you would telephone the wharf where the steamer *Spangled Star* lies, and tell the agent to hold a deck stateroom for Mr. Portersham, will you?"

"She is to sail at ten o'clock," remarked Morlein. "It's half past nine now. There won't be much time."

"Of course not. That's why I want you to phone without delay. Tell them I will try to be there at ten o'clock. If I am a little late, they are to hold the ship for me."

"All right, sir," replied Morlein, as he turned to the telephone on his desk.

Rayne took a seat and lighted one of the cigars that he took from Portersham's cigar case, which he had found in his pocket.

The Apache wanted a smoke. Even if he had not, most likely he would have taken out the case. It would be one of the little proofs of his identity which might impress Henry Morlein in case he were suspicious.

The venturesome scoundrel listened to one end of the telephonic conversation between his private secretary and the steamship agent at the wharf.

He gathered, from Morlein's replies, that the agent was objecting to holding the *Spangled Star* for any one, even the acting governor of Porto Rico. But Morlein shut him off sharply on that, telling him that those were Mr. Portersham's orders, and they had to be obeyed.

John Garrison Rayne grinned slightly behind his cigar. He was thinking how different everything would be if either Morlein or the steamship agent were to find out who this supposed Jabez Portersham really was.

"All right, sir," observed Morlein, at last, as he hung up the receiver. "They are reserving stateroom B for you on the upper deck. There is a suite of two rooms and bath. I hope you will have a pleasant trip. The steamer goes right through to New York. That will be your quickest route to Washington."

"I know that," answered Rayne. "It will suit me, all right. I may have to stay over in New York for an hour or two."

"What about your baggage? Do you want me to give orders about it?"

"No," was Rayne's reply. "I've no time to bother about that. I can borrow anything I need from some of the officers on the ship. Pajamas are about all I should want till I get to New York. It is easy to buy things there. Is my automobile ready?"

"I'll have it at the front door by the time we get there," answered Morlein, as he took up the telephone receiver again.

"Very well. You might come down to the ship with me, Morlein."

"All right!"

* * * * * *

An hour later, John Garrison Rayne was sitting in his comfortable suite on board the modern and well-equipped steamer, *Spangled Star*, as it skimmed out of San Juan harbor on its way to the Atlantic.

"Well, it is rather a relief to get away from San Juan," he muttered, with a grim smile. "There are people there I don't much like."

CHAPTER X.

NICK CARTER SMELLS A RAT.

It was early on the following morning when Nick Carter was awakened by Patsy Garvan coming into his bedroom to inquire if his chief could get up.

"What time is it?" asked Nick.

"Well, it is only six o'clock," answered Patsy. 'And you didn't go to bed till two. I don't like to bother you."

"That's nothing. Go on," broke in the detective impatiently. "What's in the wind?"

"Captain Douglas, of the San Juan police," said Patsy shortly.

"Wants to see me?"

"Says so."

"Where is he?"

"In the lobby, downstairs. Chick is with him."

"What does he want to see me about?"

"I don't know. I'll find out, if you like."

"Do. Hustle down, and come right back. I'll get dressed."

Nick Carter could make his toilet about as quickly as anybody. But, by the time he had been under the shower and rubbed himself off, and got into his clothes, a good twenty minutes had elapsed.

"Wonder why Patsy did not come back. I'll have to go down and see what Douglas wants."

Nick Carter had not much hope that it was a matter which would concern him, for he had worked so hard on the case of the jewels without success, that he did not believe anybody else could help him.

"I didn't ask where Paul Clayton was," he said to himself, as he went down the stairs. "Perhaps he is with Chick and Patsy. I suppose he is."

This supposition turned out to be correct. As the detective stepped away from the stairs—there was no elevator at the Hotel Ionic—he saw Clayton listening interestedly to a narration by Captain Douglas.

The chief of police turned as soon as he perceived Nick. Obviously, he had been merely filling in his time by talking to Clayton until the detective should come down.

Captain Douglas, head of the police force of San Juan, was a tall, lean man, with a keen face—lighted up by a pair of steel-blue eyes—and a short manner.

He had the reputation of being a splendid policeman, and it was not often that he would confess himself at a loss on any case.

Just now, however, his haggard, worried face fairly shrieked of disappointment. Nick Carter, accustomed to reading stories in the human countenance, saw that something had gone wrong, and that Douglas was metaphorically up a tree.

The captain shook hands with Nick Carter. Then he suggested that they step over to a quiet corner of the lobby, where there were several chairs.

"What's up, captain?" asked Nick.

Douglas hesitated and passed a nervous hand across his chin.

"I suppose I may trust to your keeping it quiet?"

"Of course."

"I know that," returned the captain feverishly. "But this is such an extraordinary affair, and it concerns so many big men that I don't like to speak of it even to myself."

"Gee! Why don't he cough it up?" grumbled Patsy, in a low tone.

Chick twitched his sleeve.

"Keep quiet, Patsy!"

"Go ahead, captain!" requested Nick.

"Well, the acting governor has suddenly bolted on the steamer *Spangled Star*, which left port last night——"

"What of that?" asked Nick. "Nothing remarkable, is it?"

"Well, yes; it is very remarkable when one considers all the circumstances."

"What are the circumstances?"

"He went from the palace to the wharf in his automobile, with his private secretary, Henry Morlein."

"Yes?"

"Mr. Portersham went on board the ship by himself, and was shown to the stateroom that Morlein had engaged for him by telephone. He got there at the last moment, and as soon as he was aboard, the gangplank was taken in, and off went the ship."

"I see. Well?"

"His automobile was on the wharf, with the regular chauffeur, José, at the wheel. José did not turn around to see whether the secretary was in the back seat until fifteen or twenty minutes after the steamer had gone. Then he thought he was being kept there longer than seemed necessary, and he turned his head, to ask Morlein for orders."

"Go on," urged Nick. "What is the point of all this?"

"The point is," replied Captain Douglas impressively, "that Henry Morlein was lying in the back seat of the car, senseless from chloroform, and everything in his pockets, including several hundred dollars belonging to the government, had been taken. He had been robbed of every valuable thing that had been about him."

"Chloroformed?"

"Yes. That's what the doctor says it was."

"Who is supposed to have done it?"

"Men about the wharf say there was no one near the automobile except Mr. Portersham. He was seen talking to Morlein before he went to the steamer, and José remembers hearing Mr. Portersham tell Morlein not to get out of the car, but to go right back."

"José is sure of that, eh?"

"Quite."

"What kind of a man is this José?"

"He's a reliable fellow. Everybody speaks well of him. He is a Cuban by birth. If he makes a statement, it is safe to accept it, as a rule."

"Where has Mr. Portersham gone?"

"The steamer is bound for New York. So he must be going there. Briggs, a butler at the palace, says he heard Mr. Portersham tell Morlein that he had been called to Washington."

"By telegraph?"

"No. Senator Micah Garnford called on him a little while before he sailed, telling him that he was required in Washington at once, on some government business."

"Senator Garnford?" exclaimed Nick. "Why, he is in Washington."

"No. He is in San Juan. Briggs saw him, he says."

"Briggs? I shall have to see Briggs and ask him a few things," said Nick thoughtfully. "I'm sure the senator could not be here now."

"Briggs is sure he took in Senator Garnford's card, and that he went into Mr. Portersham's room for a talk. Afterward the senator left the palace by a back doorway."

"Did any one see him go?"

"I believe not. But that is what Mr. Portersham said to Briggs."

Like a flash it came to Nick Carter that all this mystery might be mixed up with John Garrison Rayne.

The fact that somebody supposed to be the acting governor had left so abruptly on the steamer, as well as the injury to and robbery of Henry Morlein, smelled so strongly of the Apache's methods that Nick could not think of anything else.

"I should like to go to the palace, captain," he said. "Is your car outside?"

"Yes. I was hoping you would come."

"I'll take my two assistants with me. You have no objection?"

"Of course not, Mr. Carter. They'll be useful, I dare say."

"I hope so," put in Patsy. "How about Mr. Clayton?"

"I should like to go," announced Paul Clayton. "I have nothing to do here."

"All right," agreed Captain Douglas. "There's room for all of us in the car. Tumble in!"

Douglas took the wheel himself, and in a very short time the car stopped at the main entrance of the palace.

"Do you think there is anything in this that may help us to get that jewelry?" whispered Paul Clayton anxiously, in Nick Carter's ear.

"It wouldn't surprise me," was the guarded reply. "I seem to see Rayne's hand in this affair, somehow."

CHAPTER XI.

READY FOR A CLINCH.

When the party entered the big residence, Briggs met them at the door. He was white, trembling, and generally disgruntled.

He had no hesitation about admitting the chief of police, but it was not until Captain Douglas had said that his companions were friends of his, and important persons from New York, that he made room for Nick Carter and the others to go in.

"Take us to Mr. Portersham's rooms," ordered Douglas sharply, in his most official tone.

"There is no one in any of them," returned Briggs. "I have not let anybody go near them this morning. Mr. Morlein is in bed in his room, and the doctor is with him."

"He is not in a serious condition, is he?"

"No, sir. I don't think so. But he hasn't come properly out of the sleep he was in. He must have had an awfully strong dose of dope, according to what I hear."

"Very likely," agreed the captain. "We'll see him later. Where was Mr. Portersham when he saw Senator Garnford?"

"In the library."

"I'll go into the library," announced Douglas.

"The door is locked. I guess Mr. Portersham locked it when he went away. The other rooms are open."

"All right!"

Nick Carter did not take any part in this colloquy. He was listening closely, however, and making a mental note of everything that was said.

They went into the dining room, bedroom, sitting room, and public office that had been used by Portersham, but not into the library. The door of this last-named apartment was the only one that was closed and fastened.

"Haven't got a key to this door, have you, Briggs?"

"No, sir. Mr. Portersham carries it himself, always."

"What do you think, Mr. Carter?" asked the chief of police, in a rather dubious tone.

"We've got to see the inside of that room," was Nick's short response.

"Break it open?"

"If there is no other way."

"There doesn't seem to be."

"I might climb up to the window, with a ladder—or without one, for that matter," volunteered Chick.

"That wouldn't do. Everybody outside would wonder what was going on," objected Nick Carter. "We don't want to call general attention to this trouble. Eh, captain?"

"Certainly not," was Douglas' hurried response.

"I should like to shin up to that window," put in Patsy.

"Well, you can't," said Chick. "I'll do it, if it were to be done at all. You can't have all the fun."

"It's mighty little fun I've had since I've been down here," grumbled Patsy. "It's the dullest place I ever was in."

"It wouldn't be hard to force the door, would it?" asked Paul Clayton. "We can all tackle it together."

"It's a pretty heavy door," remarked Douglas. "I've seen it open, and it is nearly three inches thick."

"What's the idea?" asked Patsy.

"To keep the sound in when they are talking."

"Gee! I don't see what they want a three-inch door for, just for that," was Patsy's scornful comment. "Why couldn't they whisper if they were talking secrets."

"Well, never mind about that," interposed Nick Carter. "We've got to break it down."

"Hold on!" cried Douglas. "This is a pretty dangerous thing. I don't know that we have the right to do it. When the governor comes back he might raise Hail Columbia with us."

"You mean the acting governor, don't you?" asked Chick.

"Either one," replied the chief of police. "What are we expecting to find in there, anyhow?"

"I'm convinced that we shall find something," declared Nick Carter. "I want to make sure that Senator Garnford really did come in here. I have what I regard as

positive proof that the senator is in Washington, and I want to find out who has been impersonating him in San Juan."

"You think that is what has happened?" asked Douglas, elevating his eyebrows. "That sounds rather wild, don't you think?"

"Perhaps it does," answered Nick. "But I've been on the trail of a wild man since I came to San Juan, and I fancy I can detect the fine Italian hand of that person in this whole affair."

Captain Douglas knew the reputation of Nick Carter as a detective who did not make mistakes, and he had the highest respect for his ability and acumen. He did not press his objection.

At the worst, he would have Carter to share the responsibility.

"All right, Mr. Carter!" he said. "Let her go!"

Nick Carter, Chick, Patsy, and Clayton put their shoulders against the door, and, at a word from Nick, the four pushed with all their might.

There was a crash, but the door did not break down. Only a splintering of wood told that it had been weakened by the assault.

"Stop!" shouted Captain Douglas. "I'm afraid to go on with this. It is liable to put us all in jail. You can't fool with the United States government. This is a government building, and I don't propose to——"

Nick Carter took no heed of this protest. He had made up his mind to find out what was in this room, at any cost. He had come so near the actual truth in his surmise, that he would not have drawn back now, no matter who might have objected.

"Again, boys!" he shouted.

The four hurled themselves again at the weakened door. This time there was more effect than at first.

Another crash resounded through the building, and, as the door toppled, the quartet went sprawling into the room, with Patsy and Chick landing with a bump against the heavy table in the middle.

Nick Carter and Paul Clayton fell on top of the door.

The detective was the first to gain his feet. He had caught a glimpse of something under the table that made him rush over in a hurry.

"Push this table away!" he shouted.

His two assistants and Paul Clayton put their hands to the ponderous piece of furniture and shoved.

Heavy as it was, it had good, easy casters. Therefore the table rolled away several feet at once.

As it did so, there was revealed, lying on the floor, Jabez Portersham, his eyes asking dumbly for assistance.

The gag was in his mouth, and the cruel wires with which he had been bound were cutting into his flesh. He was nearly exhausted.

"Heaven save us!" ejaculated Captain Douglas. "It's Mr. Portersham!"

Deeply as Nick Carter sympathized with the unfortunate acting governor, he could not help glancing, with a slight smile of triumph, at the chief of police.

The detective's vague suspicion had been verified to a degree by the discovery. He had been certain that the man who had posed as Senator Garnford was an impostor. Here was part proof, at least.

Nick Carter's ever-useful pocketknife, with its many tools in the handle, came into play again. A pair of wire cutters was included in its equipment, and it did not take long to snip the wires off the unfortunate official.

They soon had Portersham on his feet. Then Patsy and Chick, in obedience to the instructions of Nick Carter, ran him up and down the room a few times, to take the stiffness out of his limbs.

Afterward they sat him in his own easy-chair, and waited for him to compose himself.

"What does it mean?" he asked, in a dazed way, as he passed his tongue over his dry lips. "What could have induced Senator Garnford, of all men, to play such a trick on me?"

"It was Senator Garnford, then?" asked Douglas.

"Yes. I remember that much," was the reply.

"You are mistaken," put in Nick Carter.

"No," insisted Portersham. "I saw him. We were talking, in a friendly way. Then, all at once, he caught me around the neck and put some stuff to my face in a cloth that made me lose my senses. I know it was Senator Garnford. There is no mistake about that."

"You're wrong," said Nick. "There was a mistake. A rascal pretended to be the senator. He wanted to get to you, and now he has got away as the result of his game here."

"I don't see how it could be," said Portersham, shaking his head feebly. "Who do you think the man was?"

"His name is John Garrison Rayne."

"What?" cried Portersham. "The safe robber and bank sneak? Rayne? I've heard of him."

"So have I," added Douglas bitterly. "To my cost. If it is that blackguard, I'll have him before he gets out of San Juan."

"I'm afraid not," contradicted Nick Carter. "Unless I am very much mistaken, he is on the Atlantic Ocean, well on his way to New York by this time."

"What makes you think so?"

"I can't give you all my reasons in detail. It would take too long. But we will inquire at the wharf, and I think we shall find that he went on the *Spangled Star*, pretending he was Jabez Portersham."

"Pretending he was I?" put in the acting governor. "I don't understand."

"You will later," answered Nick. "There's a telephone on the floor, Patsy. It was knocked off the table when we shoved it away. See if you can get the agent of the steamship line, will you?"

"Sure!" replied Patsy, glad to have something to do.

There was ten minutes at the telephone, and Patsy announced that Mr. Portersham had been a messenger on the steamer, *Spangled Star*, which left at ten o'clock the night before."

"The blackguard!" ejaculated Portersham, adding something under his breath that was rather strong, but hardly to be wondered at in the circumstances. "You'll follow him up, won't you?"

The eyes of Nick Carter narrowed, and his firm jaw seemed to take on additional hardness, as he replied:

"I have business with that fellow, John Garrison Rayne, Mr. Portersham, that has brought me all the way from New York. That is the only reason I am here. When I do round him up—as I will before he is a month older—I'll make him answer for all that he has done. That means that you will be avenged, I assure you."

"You will have to go to New York after him, I suppose?"

"That is where we must look first," returned Nick.

Portersham clenched his fists, and, although weakened by his many hours of torturing confinement, he showed an energy which would become more powerful as he regained his strength.

"I wish I could go with you, Mr. Carter," he said. "I don't mind a straight fight. But this——"

The telephone bell rang. Patsy whipped the receiver off the hook and shouted "Hello!"

"What's that?" he went on, into the instrument. "You say she's in trouble? Got a wireless?"

He turned to those in the room, putting a hand over the transmitter.

"Gee!" he ejaculated. "Here's more of it! Well, what do you think of that?"

"What?" demanded Chick.

"Great Cæsar! Wouldn't that jar you?" was all Patsy responded, as he turned again to the telephone.

He listened a few moments. Then, as he clapped the receiver on the hook, he announced, trying to speak calmly:

"The steamer *Spangled Star* is in trouble a hundred miles out. One of her engines has broken down, and she is limping back to port as well as she can with the other."

"What? To San Juan?" demanded Chick.

"Sure!" replied Patsy.

"That's good. We'll be there to meet her when she comes in," said Nick Carter, with a smile that was partly a vengeful frown.

CHAPTER XII.

A PRESENT FOR SAN JUAN.

The steamer *Spangled Star*, very lame, with only one engine working, and with her propeller finding it difficult to urge her along on a straight course, came into San Juan harbor, wabbling toward her wharf.

Before she got in altogether, she stopped, for she was hardly manageable at intervals, and a motor boat put out from the shore and hailed her.

In the boat were Nick Carter and his two assistants, with Captain Douglas and Paul Clayton.

The police uniform of Douglas was enough to make the captain of the steamer lower a sea ladder right away. He might not have done it for one in citizen's clothes—which was the reason Nick Carter had insisted on Douglas putting on his blue and brass, gold badge and all, to impress the commander.

Nick wasted no time when once he got on deck. Taking the skipper aside, he asked if Jabez Portersham was aboard.

"You bet he is. Of course, he is acting governor of Porto Rico, and I couldn't help taking him as a passenger, even though it made us nearly half an hour late in getting away. I believe he's hoodooed us, too, for I never had my machinery break down before. We'd had our engines inspected, and there was no need for them to throw off. Yet, here's our sta'boa'd engine gone so far it'll be only good for the junk pile, and——"

"Where's Mr. Portersham's cabin?" interrupted Nick, when he saw that the irate captain was likely to keep on airing his woes indefinitely. "Can we see him?"

The skipper glanced at Douglas inquiringly. An almost imperceptible nod reassured him, and he pointed to a doorway which led to the deck cabins—the most expensive on the vessel.

"Look out, chief!" whispered Patsy. "He may be waiting for us. You don't want to run right into a gun before you know it."

"I don't think he would dare to shoot just now," smiled Nick. "When he is cornered, Rayne knows enough to give in. He depends on his cunning to escape later."

"That may be all so," admitted Patsy grudgingly. "But you'd better let me go first. If he plugs me, it won't matter, because I ain't of any importance. It's different with you. If he got you, where would we find another to take your place. So——"

Patsy was surging ahead, to go into the narrow corridor, without waiting for permission.

Nick caught him by the shoulder and swung him aside, with playful sternness.

"You rat!" he laughed. "Get out! I'm going in myself. You and Chick keep watch on deck. You never know what Rayne will do. Get out of the way!"

The detective had got into the corridor, and had his eye on the door of the stateroom that had been pointed out to him as Portersham's, when he was startled by a loud shout from Patsy, echoed by Chick and Paul Clayton.

He understood at once that the disturbance had been caused by some act of Rayne's, but he did not know what it was.

It would not be safe for him to go out of the corridor now, leaving a free route for Rayne to liberty.

"They may have seen him at a window," he muttered. "Anyhow, he can't get away so long as we have him on the ship."

The door of the stateroom was locked. But Nick Carter had anticipated that, and already had his jackknife in his hand.

One jab and a turn of the wrist, and open came the stateroom door.

There were two rooms and a bath, it will be remembered, but only one door led to the corridor. The others communicated with each other.

Nick ran into the first room. It was empty!

He hurried to the next. To his surprise, that was unoccupied, too!

He looked into the diminutive bathroom, which was the last of the three. But he was not astonished to see that no one was in there.

"Chief!" bellowed Patsy, outside.

"By all the gods!" exclaimed Nick Carter. "He's trying to trick us, after all."

The window of the middle room was wide open, with the curtains flapping idly in the opening.

It was not a large window, but a man not too stout, and who was fairly active, could get through.

This was apparent to the detective at a glance. The next moment he had gone through headfirst, falling on the deck in a heap.

It was rather an uncomfortable proceeding, and he bumped his head so that it rang again. But it was the quickest way to get out, and Nick Carter did not mind a crack on the head when on the heels of a slippery criminal.

He was on his feet in an instant, and looking around to see what the situation might be.

He heard Chick and Patsy both shouting on the other side of the vessel, and could distinguish the sound of running feet. Then he saw Captain Douglas holding out his arms, as if to stop somebody at the forward end of the deck, while the commander of the steamer indulged himself in picturesque profanity, because, as he declared, they were making a fool of his ship.

"Hey, chief!" bellowed Patsy.

"What is it?" responded Nick.

"Catch him when he comes around!" came from Chick.

"Stop, or I'll plug you!" roared Captain Douglas at somebody.

It was just as this threat emanated from the chief of police that a man came tearing across the deck, in the shadow of the smokestacks, and made a leap for the gangway, where the ladder hung.

The ladder was a perfectly straight one, the sort of things to be negotiated only by a nimble person, whose head was cool and level.

But John Garrison Rayne was both nimble and unterrified.

He gave one glance at the ladder, saw that the motor boat was made fast to it at the bottom, and over he went!

He was not quick enough to elude Nick Carter, however. The detective surmised what he intended to do before he did it.

So it came about that, when Rayne was nearly at the bottom of the ladder, the detective had already begun to climb down, and was three or four rungs on his way.

Rayne feverishly began to untie the painter.

"Ha! ha!" he shouted, with laughter that had a touch of hysteria in it. "Fooled you again, Carter!"

"Not yet, my friend!" was the detective's rejoinder. "Look out! I'm coming!"

"If you do you'll drop into the water!"

Rayne had the boat loose by this time. Then, turning the engine over, he got it to moving as he took the wheel to steer toward the shore.

Again the rascal laughed loudly, while Chick and Patsy, on the deck above, screamed warnings to their chief.

"Look out!" begged Patsy. "Better let him go than you tumble into the sea. "Don't take the chance!"

"That's so. Keep back!" added Chick.

Paul Clayton and Douglas were both standing near the side of the ship, looking over.

The former did not speak, while the chief of police contented himself with pointing his revolver at John Garrison Rayne, in the motor boat, and threatening to fill him so full of lead that he would weigh a ton.

It was just now that Nick Carter took the chance which his assistants pleaded so hard with him not to attempt.

He saw that there was a considerable width of open water between him and the motor boat. On the other hand, he was far enough up the ladder to be able to make a considerable broad jump.

The thought of this scoundrel getting away, now that he was so nearly caught, maddened him. So, judging his distance carefully, he leaped out from the ladder with all the power he could summon.

It was a risky performance. But luck reënforced judgment, and the detective came plump down into the waist of the little craft, immediately behind Rayne, who stood at the wheel, with his feet far down in the well.

The motor boat rocked dangerously from the concussion when Nick Carter dropped. Before it could quite recover, it was caught in a cross sea that tested it a little more.

Only the most skillful manipulation by Rayne prevented it capsizing.

Nick gave him just time to get the boat on an even keel. Then he fell upon the rascal with both hands!

A rough and tumble in a motor boat is necessarily full of risk. It is always likely to end in a ducking for both combatants.

How Nick Carter and John Garrison Rayne escaped this unpleasantness is not to be explained. Only the fact can be stated.

Perhaps it was because Nick Carter was so dexterous in putting on the handcuffs when the Apache was not looking.

At all events, in less than two minutes, after a hard fight, John Garrison Rayne lay in the bottom of the dinky little craft, handcuffed, and with the detective sitting on him.

The boat was steered back to the ship, and the others came aboard.

"See if he has got the jewelry, Chick," ordered Nick Carter. "I'll hold him."

"Get back there, Chick!" commanded Patsy, grinning. "I'm the boy that can frisk him."

"Here's two bags," announced Chick, as he brought them forth from the rascal's inside pockets.

"Let Mr. Clayton look at them and see what's inside."

The bags were given to Clayton, and while he went hastily through their contents and saw that they made up a large part of the Stephen Reed booty, including the sultan's pearls, Patsy found the flat packing inside Rayne's shirt.

"That about makes the tally," said Clayton. "How can I ever thank you, Mr. Carter?" he added, with something like a sob.

"Nonsense," was Nick Carter's reply. "It was all in the day's work. Now that we've got the jewelry, we'll watch it closer than we did before."

"When are we going to New York?" asked Patsy.

"As soon as we can get a ship to take us," said Nick earnestly.

"What are you going to do with this fellow?" asked Captain Douglas, stirring John Garrison Rayne with his foot. "Do you want to take him to New York to answer to this charge of stealing the jewelry, or will you leave him in San Juan, to be put through in our criminal courts?"

"You can have him," laughed Nick Carter.

THE END.

"The Clew of the White Collar; or, Nick Carter on a Twisted Trail," will be the title of the long, complete story which you will find in the next issue, No. 144, of the NICK CARTER STORIES, out June 12th. In the forthcoming story you will read of the further adventures of the famous detective with the clever John Garrison Rayne.

Where's the Commandant?

By C. C. WADDELL.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 140 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE ATTIC.

There is little to be gained, however, from regrets over lost opportunities, and Meredith, as befitted the daughter of an officer rated one of the most resourceful in the service, turned very speedily from that bootless pursuit to consider what advantage she still might glean from the information which had come her way.

One point she settled without delay; she would not hold to her intention of leaving the roof she was under immediately after breakfast. On the other hand—distasteful as the experience might prove—she would remain until she had successfully ferreted out the true cause of all the mystery which seemed to envelop the place and its occupants. Heedless of her obligations as a guest, she would watch with unremitting vigilance every move of her host and hostess.

A higher law than that of hospitality now demanded her allegiance; for, convinced that Mrs. Schilder was concerned in the colonel's abduction, or at least friendly to the abductors, she was prepared to cast off all restraints, and stand solely on the principle, "All is fair in war."

Also she realized that she must communicate her discoveries promptly to Grail. The intelligence might very readily dovetail in with what he already had, and aid him materially in his task.

Therefore, as soon as the morning had sufficiently advanced to make her appearance seem natural to any servants who might be about, she arose, and, leaving Mrs. Schilder still soundly asleep, hastened to her own room, with the idea of dressing, and proceeding to the nearest telephone station. There were telephones in the house, of course, but she did not care to use any of them at the risk of being overheard.

On arriving at the chamber she had left in such panic the night before, she looked vainly about for the frock she had taken off, which, owing to the haste of her departure from Chicago, was the only one she had brought with her.

Hurriedly she rang the bell to summon Marie, and instituted inquiries.

"Pardon, mam'selle." The maid shrugged her shoulders. "Ze skirt had rubbed against ze w'eel of ze motor, and was in a condition deplorable—all covered wiz grease and dust down ze side. I took ze liberty, mam'selle, to have eet sent to ze cleanair's, and eet weel not be back before twelve o'clock. Naturally, I did not anticipate zat mam'selle would arise so early."

Meredith gave a gasp. She herself had not noticed that the dress was soiled on removing it, although she was fair enough to admit that in her preoccupation at that time she might have overlooked even more serious damage. Still, that was not the point. Was she to be held prisoner for any such absurd cause until noon?

"But I wish to go out, Marie," she expostulated, "now, at once! You must get me something to wear."

The girl again shrugged helplessly. "Pardon once more, ma'mselle, but Madame Schildair's figure is so tall and slendair zat I fear eet would be impossible for ma'mselle to wear any of her gowns. Her waist ees only twenty-two inch, w'ereas ma'mselle"—she cast a calculating glance—"must be fully twenty-six."

"Then get me something of yours," it was on Meredith's lips to demand; "something of somebody's, if even only a raincoat to cover me with." But she checked herself in time. It would not do to attach too much importance to her errand; already Marie was beginning to eye her curiously.

"Very well, then," she said carelessly. "I suppose I shall simply have to wait. Fortunately, it does not make any especial difference."

After all, the thought had struck her, there would be very little risk in telephoning from the house, provided she used the main instrument in the library downstairs, and saw to it that all the extensions were switched off.

But when, with this project in view, she repaired to the library, she found, to her disgust, that Schilder was ensconced there, going over some papers, and she had to fabricate a hasty and rather feeble excuse to account for her intrusion.

Moreover, a second visit, a half hour later, found him still there; and when a third trip revealed him seemingly anchored to his chair, and she ventured to inquire, in a casual way, what time he usually departed for business, he informed her, rather shortly, that he was not going to the office that morning. He had matters to attend to at home.

A messenger call box in the hall seemed to offer her recourse, and, grasping at the suggestion, she gave the handle a twist which almost jerked it off; then hastened to her room to write a note to Grail.

But, with the note finished, the slow minutes passed without any response to her ring, until it seemed certain that even the most tortoiselike messenger ought to have arrived, and she started an investigation, only to learn that the boy had come and been sent away again, since she had failed to apprise the man at the door of having sent in a call.

Swallowing her chagrin as best she could, she gave another twist to the knob, and this time not only gave notice of her action, but seated herself at the window to watch for the messenger.

Presently a blue-uniformed boy hove in sight down the street, and turned his bicycle into the drive leading up to the door. Meredith, note in hand, lost no time in getting downstairs; but it was only to see the servant on guard turning back from the entrance.

"Boy hasn't showed up yet, ma'am," he assured her unfalteringly. "Wonderful how long them little rascals does take sometimes to get around."

Meredith realized now, with a sick feeling, what she had begun to suspect for an hour or more past—that she was being deliberately thwarted and baffled in her attempts to communicate with Grail, probably under instructions from Mrs. Schilder herself.

The incident of the dress, the palpable falsehood in regard to the coming of the messenger boy; more than all, the constant if unobtrusive surveillance exercised by Marie, all assured her that she was making no mistake. Now that she came to think of it, she could not recall a time that morning when the maid, with her sly, watchful eyes, had not been hovering close at hand, apparently absorbed in

her duties, yet always in a position to note everything that Meredith might do.

Did it mean, then, that she was to be cut off from all intercourse with the outside world? If she should assert herself, and insist on using the telephone, would the polite evasions and lies she had hitherto met change to harsher and more restrictive measures?

For a moment she was tempted to put the matter to the test; then, with more sober second thought, she decided to wait. To provoke a scene at this juncture, or to display any undue eagerness to get away, would be but to disclose her hand to Mrs. Schilder. It was not by force, but by craft, and a pretense of innocence, that she must undermine her wily antagonist. She must match her wits against those of the other woman and overcome.

Suddenly, like a flash of inspiration, there came to her mind the recollection of the wireless telephone apparatus which her father had once rigged up for experimental purposes in the attic of this very house. The colonel had become very friendly with Otto Schilder, and, being an enthusiastic electrician, had suggested the installation of the wireless apparatus, with which they might hold experimental conversations, and had forthwith secured the instruments and arranged them in the Schilders' attic. Meredith was not especially interested in such experiments, but she had often seen her father use the apparatus at the fort, and believed she could manage it in such an emergency.

The door leading up to the attic from the third floor was unlocked, but how to escape the sharp espionage of Marie presented a difficulty, and after vainly trying a number of ruses, she almost despaired of accomplishing it, until at last, about noon, hope was revived by the ringing of a bell summoning Marie to her mistress.

The maid who took her place on guard, a stupid sort of girl, Meredith had little difficulty in disposing of; then, the coast clear at last, she hurried to the floor above.

The place, lighted only from above by small skylights, stretched away, dim and shadowy, into the recesses and corners under the eaves. There were boxes and packing cases all around, behind which anything might be lurking. The silence, too, was a little fearsome; the only sound to break the stillness was the buzzing of a fly.

Meredith did not falter long, however, but turned to the business before her, and, lightly threading her way between the boxes, reached the table, with its black cabinet on top, and the wires running up to the mast on the roof.

Instrument, table and all were covered with the dust of long disuse, but when she had slipped the receiver on over her ears, and had touched a knob or two on the box, she was delighted to find that the instrument had lost none of its efficiency.

CHAPTER XIII.

WIRELESS TALK.

At first, a mere jumble of indistinguishable sounds greeted her, punctuated by the sharp crack-crack from two amateur wireless telegraphers holding conversation across her field of hearing; but soon she had remedied all that, and had her apparatus tuned down to the wave lengths of the instrument at the post.

"Hello, there!" she broke in heedlessly on some practice work being given a couple of recruits by a sergeant instructor. "This is important," she said, as the sergeant advised her, rather brusquely, not to "butt in." "I wish to speak to Adjutant Grail at once!"

"And who are you?" the sergeant demanded, still truculent over the interruption.

"Miss Vedant!"

"Oh!" The voice, borne on the wings of the air, was now smooth and soft as oil. "Excuse me, miss, for speaking as I did. I mistook you for one of those amateurs that's always bothering around. I'm sorry, miss, but Captain Grail ain't at the post just now."

"Do you know where he is, then? Or could you get hold of him for me?"

"I haven't the slightest idea where he is, ma'am." The sergeant's stiff tone seemed also to indicate that neither did he care. Evidently he was of the party to whom Grail's very name had become hateful.

Recollecting, however, to whom he was talking, he added, less churlishly: "The adjutant, ma'am, as I understand it, hasn't been on the reservation since seven o'clock last night, and he left no word where he was going."

"Nor when to expect him back?"

"Nor when to expect him back," the sergeant echoed, a trifle cynically, for it was a matter of general belief at the barracks that Grail, unable to face the charges against him, had skipped out. Still, it was not for him to voice any such rumor to the colonel's daughter, and he inquired diplomatically: "In case he does come in, ma'am, is there any message you wish to leave for him?"

"No; I guess not." She hesitated. "No. I will try to call him up later in the day."

Bitterly disappointed at the failure, and doubtful whether another opportunity would be granted her to reach the attic, she leaned her head in her two hands over the table, and tried to decide what to do.

Might it not be better, now that she was here, to remain beside the instrument until she could effect communication with Grail, rather than to risk the very dubious chances of again eluding the vigilance belowstairs? But she shook her head. Her absence, once discovered, and with the certainty that she could not have left the house in dishabille, they would never rest until they had ransacked the place from cellar to roof. Her retreat could not fail to be discovered, unless she were able to hide from the prying eyes of the searchers.

The suggestion drew her glance to a closet or compartment at one side of the attic, which, sheathed with iron, and having a combination lock on the door, had been fitted up as a sort of strong room. She had heard it spoken of, and remembered hearing that it was now in disuse and unlocked.

It was the very place. No one would ever dream of her being secreted inside, and she would be almost as safe from discovery as in a burglar-proof vault; yet there was a window at one side to give her light and air, and she could be just as comfortable there as in the wider spaces of the attic outside.

She stepped quickly to the door, but as she paused to fumble with the latch there reached her from within a faint sound of rustling and scratching.

Rats! The idea of opening that door, or seeking refuge in the strong room, died abruptly. With a timorous gasp, she fled down the attic steps as fast as her feet could carry her.

Fortunately, there was no one on the third floor to wit-

ness her breathless exit, and, recovering somewhat from her panic, she managed to close the attic door and regain her own room without detection.

Hardly was she safe, however, before Marie made her appearance, looking distinctly worried and upset.

"Where has ma'mselle been?" she demanded, almost crossly. "I have been looking everywhere for her to serve her ze luncheon."

"I?" Meredith found it hard work not to pant. "Oh, I have just been strolling about the house. By the way, Marie," deftly turning the subject, "has not that frock of mine come back from the cleaner's yet?"

Marie was apologetic. The "pig of a cleaner" had deceived her outrageously; she had just sent over for the frock, only to be informed that it would not be finished until four o'clock.

"Oh, well, it really makes no difference," Meredith assured her carelessly. "Since I have given up the idea of going out to-day. Indeed, I think I shall try to take a long nap this afternoon. I did not sleep at all well last night."

With this plausible excuse, she managed to throw the sentinel maid off guard, and, as Mrs. Schilder went out in the automobile, was able to effect two more trips to the attic undiscovered, although, unfortunately, without result. Each time she was informed that Captain Grail had not yet returned to the post.

So the long afternoon wore away fruitlessly, and with the passing of the hours passed also that feeling of buoyancy which Meredith had experienced in the morning, and which, no doubt, was largely due to the excitement of finding herself actively involved in the game.

Now, with the reaction, she was growing dispirited and apprehensive once more. Nothing seemed to have been accomplished. Her father's whereabouts still continued a mystery; and, in addition, she now began to worry over Grail's protracted absence. What if something had happened to him, too? Indeed, was it not almost certain that something must have happened to him?

Darker and darker grew her misgivings as she gave rein to her imagination, until, when Mrs. Schilder at last came in, she found the poor girl a picture of disconsolate woe.

"Is there no news?" Meredith raised her wan face in piteous question. Even from this deceitful source she might gather something in the way of a glance or expression.

But Mrs. Schilder's countenance revealed nothing.

"I am sorry," she said, "but the investigation seems to have come to a standstill. Every clew has been carefully worked out, the officers tell me, but to absolutely no avail. However," she dropped her gloved hand on Meredith's shoulder, "you must not let that discourage you, my dear. No news is always good news, remember; and no one concerned is lacking in activity in any direction. Mr. Schilder, indeed, is so deeply concerned that he has invited all the officers of the post to meet him here to-night and discuss what measures shall next be undertaken, and he says that unless they can show him a reasonable promise of success he will report the disappearance to the civil authorities.

"He told me to tell you of this conference, my dear," she went on, "and ask you if you did not want to be present; although I told him that I hardly deemed it wise, since theories and conjectures are sure to be advanced which cannot help but be harrowing to you."

"No." Meredith's tremors ceased with the offer of a change of action. Major Appleby might be bombastic, and Lieutenant Hemingway a fool, but surely there was some one among the officers—blunt old Dobbs, the surgeon, maybe—to whom she could whisper her suspicions.

"No," she repeated, with decision, "there can be nothing said to cause me more apprehension than the possibilities I have already pictured to myself. Thank Mr. Schilder for me, please, and tell him that I shall certainly attend the conference."

First, however, she determined to call up Grail once more; then, if she failed to find him at the fort, she would be satisfied that some calamity had befallen him, and that both for his sake and her father's she would have to resort to another ally.

Accordingly, an opportunity arising for her to slip away just as Major Appleby and his associates commenced to arrive, she stole once more to the attic.

Confronted by the darkness and the possibility of scampering rats, she halted for a moment, strongly tempted to turn and flee; then, nerving herself to the effort, although still quaking with trepidation, she dashed up the steps and over toward the wireless instrument.

Halfway across the space, her wild rush was abruptly stayed, and she came to her knees, a stifled shriek of terror on her lips.

She had stumbled over the body of a man, bound and gagged, lying directly in her path.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE MARKED NAMES.

As Grail turned back into his quarters, after seeing Meredith off, that night of her arrival from Chicago, his face had fallen into lines of troubled solicitude, and he gave an ominous shake of the head, for it was idle to deny that the startling news concerning Sasaku had filled him with the gravest sort of misgivings. Indicating that this was no ordinary game of hide and seek, such as the gumshoe men of the various powers are accustomed to play with each other, but a sinister intrigue, prepared to balk at nothing to gain its ends, it raised a serious question as to the possible fate which had befallen the colonel.

Hurriedly summoning his "striker," he sent him out for a copy of the extra *Herald* containing an account of the murder; then, when the paper had arrived, he devoted himself to a careful perusal and analysis of the details.

There was really but little to be gleaned. The body of the Japanese had been found on the stairs of a rooming house for laboring men, down near the river front, and, as Grail noted, not more than a block or two away from the Dolliver Foundry. Struck evidently from behind, by an unexpected knife thrust, as he was starting to go out, he had lurched forward, clutching at the banister, then sagged down lifeless on the third step from the top, his straw hat rolling on down the flight, and, by exciting the curiosity of a lodger on the floor below, leading, later on, to a discovery of the dead man.

Life had not been extinct more than half an hour when he was found, it was stated, and thus the time of the murder was definitely fixed at about two o'clock in the afternoon; yet, although a number of the occupants of the place had been in their rooms at that hour, no one could be

unearthed who had heard any outcry or sound of altercation.

Indeed, there seemed an utter lack of any clew to indicate the motive or perpetrator of the crime. The door of the house was usually left open, all kinds of people coming and going at will; so it was assumed that the murderer must have entered deliberately, gained the third floor, then laid in wait in the dark hallway until Sasaku, all unsuspecting, came out. That the assassin did not belong in the house seemed certain, from the fact that the Japanese was an utter stranger in the place, having only engaged his room the afternoon before, and being, so far as could be learned, unacquainted with any of the other tenants. Besides, all those at home at the time of the affair were able to account satisfactorily for their movements.

Some significance, at first, was attached to the circumstance that the door of the room directly across the corridor from Sasaku's was found ajar, whereas the man to whom the room belonged, a foundry worker by the name of Marice Matschka, was known to be very circumspect about keeping his door locked, and one of the fourth-floor lodgers, who had come in at noon, asserted that when he passed by the door had undoubtedly been closed.

Matschka, however, was able to prove conclusively that he himself had not been back to the place since leaving for work at six o'clock that morning, and also stoutly denied having given up his key, or sent any one else there. He was confident, he said, that he had locked the door behind him, as usual, that morning, but, of course, might be mistaken, and in that case it would have been an easy matter for the unlatched portal to have swung open in the draft.

There was, moreover, no reason to believe that he had known the Japanese, or could have harbored ill will against him for any cause, so this line of investigation was very speedily abandoned.

In short, the case was a puzzle, looked at from any angle. Sasaku's scanty effects, consisting chiefly of his clothes, a few letters, and a notebook containing a few names and addresses, offered nothing in the way of a clew; nor did his history, so far as it could be traced out, disclose the existence of any enemies. He had been an affable, friendly sort of a little chap, generally well liked. Finally, it was plain that robbery was not the cause, since a diamond ring, a gold watch and chain, and some fifty dollars in his pocket, had been left untouched.

The police, all at sea for an adequate motive, had to fall back on the fantastic theory that he had been the victim of some sort of Oriental vendetta at the hands of his own countrymen; and, with great pretense at secret knowledge, made significant allusions to oath-bound clans and mysterious brotherhoods.

Grail had just about completed his reading of the newspaper narrative, digesting carefully not only what appeared, but also what lay between the lines, when Sergeant Cato entered and saluted him.

The sergeant was dusty and perspiring from what had evidently been an arduous day, but his beaming expression showed that his efforts had not been in vain.

"You've found out what I wanted, eh?" Grail glanced up eagerly.

"I think I've got it all, sir."

"Good!" The adjutant nodded toward a chair, and extended a cigar. "Sit down and make yourself comfortable, sergeant, and let's have the story as quickly as possible. I would tell you to go and get something to eat first, but things have been happening since you've been away that make haste imperative."

"Oh, I'm not hungry, sir," Cato assured him. "This beats a meal any old time"—puffing luxuriously at the perfecto—"and, besides, I had a sandwich over at Sunset Bluffs."

"Sunset Bluffs, eh? Then you *did* have time to look up the motor-boat business for me?"

"Sure, sir. It came in yesterday morning, just as you said, billed to Otto Schilder, and was taken out on his order late yesterday afternoon by Mike Flannery, a truckman over there on the other side of the river."

"And you talked to Flannery, of course?"

"No." Cato shook his head. "He was out with his wagon. But I did better, sir. I had a chin with Flannery's kid, a boy about ten years old."

"Ah!"

"Yes, sir. He and I took in a moving-picture show together"—the sergeant grinned—"and before it was over I guess he had told enough to earn him the licking of his life, if the old man should ever find it out. His father, it seems, intended to haul the boat out to the lake last night, but just as he was getting ready to start out a stranger came around to engage him for an immediate moving job. A big, dark-eyed man, the boy said he was, who gave the name of Dabney, and seemed to be in a great hurry."

"A big, dark-eyed man, who gave the name of Dabney," Grail echoed. "Go on!"

"Well, sir, Flannery, seeing a chance to squeeze in some extra money, took him up, and, leaving the boat there in his stable yard, went off with his truck and horses, expecting to be back and start for the lake about one o'clock, Dabney telling him that his job wouldn't take more than that long. What with one thing and another, though, he didn't get back until the six-o'clock whistles were blowing, and then, according to the kid, he sure turned the air blue. Somebody had borrowed the motor boat during his absence, for a joy ride—his yard is only a stone's throw from the river—and it was a sight to behold, all covered with river mud and grease, and dripping wet inside and out. He was in an awful sweat for fear Schilder would find out about it, and he worked like a nailer for over two hours, cleaning it up and polishing the brasswork, before he dared set out with it for the lake. Funny thing, though," Cato concluded, "he doesn't suspect this man Dabney in the matter at all. He blames a gang of young roughs who live in the neighborhood."

Grail smiled. "As you infer, sergeant, it was Dabney, all right," he said. "He had need for a swift boat on the river last night, and he didn't want the hiring of one to be traced to him. Consequently, he adopted this rather elaborate ruse to get hold of the one in Flannery's care. Dabney, although passing himself off as an Englishman, and ostensibly conducting a real-estate office, is, I may as well tell you, the man tipped off to me by Sasaku as a Russian spy, and the leader of the operations to which Colonel Vedant has fallen victim."

"Then you think," Cato inquired quickly, "that the colonel was carried off in this motor boat?"

"Assuredly," Grail answered, and briefly explained his theory of the seizure, and the employment of the electric crane to convey the prisoner and his captors outside of the inclosure.

"The next thing, of course," he concluded, "was to get

their man away as quickly and quietly as possible, and, naturally, the river suggested itself as the most convenient avenue."

"That sounds plausible enough." Cato thoughtfully scratched his head. "But what gets me, captain, is how did they know so much about the motor boat, and just how to get hold of it? Is this Dabney-ovitch, or whatever his real name is, a pal of Mr. Schilder's?"

"No," the adjutant admitted. "On the other hand, I think he has taken especial pains to avoid meeting Schilder, or coming under his eye. But"—he hesitated slightly—"the point you raise offers no difficulty. Take my word for it, sergeant, there was a way for Dabney to find out with absolute certainty anything he wanted.

"And now," he broke off, rather abruptly, "tell me what you discovered in regard to the cigarette?"

"Oh, that was easy." Cato's brows cleared. "I scored a bull's-eye the second place I went into. It's a little tobacco and stationery shop down on Third Street, and the old fellow who runs it is one of the talkative kind. He said he'd laid in a stock of these cigarettes for four customers of his who get their newspapers there every morning, and who live at a rooming house just around the corner. Here, I have the names." He produced a card on which he had jotted a memorandum. "Miller Vance——"

"Ah!" Grail interrupted sharply. "The man who operated the crane. I had a very strong suspicion that he was Russian, for all his alias, and the American twist he had managed to acquire to his tongue. However, that is not especially important. Go on, sergeant."

"I. Pepernik, Louis Minowsky," read Cato, "and Maurice Matschka."

"Maurice Matschka!" The officer sprang to his feet. "That is a link worth looking into," he muttered. "Come on!" He caught up his hat, and gave a quick nod of the head toward Cato. "I am going to the city hall."

Arriving at the municipal building, and proceeding to police headquarters, he was directed, on inquiry, to a certain Detective Krause, as having the case of the murdered Japanese in charge.

"What makes all you people out at the fort so interested in this affair, anyhow?" the detective asked, with a curious glance at Grail. "Major Appleby and Lieutenant Hemingway was over here before supper, and I told them all there was to know. The best I can do for you, captain, is just to go over the same ground."

"Of course," Grail assented, with a smile. "Still you know how it is, Mr. Kruse; every one wants to hear a story at firsthand; and, as I was, perhaps, better acquainted with poor Sasaku than any of the other officers at the mess, there is just a possibility that I may be able to throw some light on the tragedy."

As a matter of fact, the detective required very little urging. He had come to such an absolute halt in the investigation that he was only too willing to repeat the story to any one who offered even the faintest show of providing a solution.

His recital, though, if somewhat more diffuse, was practically the same as that which Grail had already read in the newspaper. He presented nothing new in the way of any material details.

"H'm!" The adjutant thoughtfully stroked his chin at the completion of the narrative. "There would be no objection, I suppose, to letting me examine the notebook which you say was found on Sasaku?"

"Certainly not, sir." He stepped away to get it, adding, as he returned and handed it over: "You won't find anything there to help you, captain. We've been over it already with a fine-tooth comb, and it seems nothing but a list of names and people he'd met; some of them in the city directory, and some not."

Grail, however, evidently preferred to decide this point for himself; for slowly and painstakingly he ran over the pages, scrutinizing each entry carefully before he passed on to the next.

The detective, fidgeting at what he manifestly regarded as wasted time, presently excused himself, on the plea of wanting to do some telephoning, and sauntered off, and, with his going, Grail turned back a couple of pages to point out significantly to Cato the name of Dabney, with a little, almost indistinguishable mark set opposite it.

No further discovery was elicited until they reached the last page; then Grail gave a sudden start, as he read, with the same cabalistic mark against it, the name of Rezonoff.

"Rezonoff!" he muttered, with a frown of grave foreboding. "That can only be Count Boris Rezonoff, captain in the imperial engineers!"

Cato, gathering from his tone that something was seriously wrong, edged up closer.

"Is it bad, sir?" he whispered.

Grail vouchsafed no answer, but stood silent a moment, the look of apprehension growing on his face; then snapped open his watch and glanced at the time.

"Too early, by far," he commented, under his breath. "I shall have to wait at least two hours yet."

Meanwhile, Cato, glancing over his shoulder, had been reading down the page of the notebook, and now he gave a quick exclamation.

"There's another name with that same mark against it," he breathed excitedly. "Don't you see it. Down there at the bottom, underneath your thumb!"

But Grail, as though recalled to himself, sharply closed the book.

"Oh, that one is of no consequence," he insisted; yet he knew that it was, for he had already noted the name with the telltale check opposite.

In Sasaku's stiff, angular handwriting was set down: "Mrs. Otto Schilder!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

THE NEGRO AND THE HORSE.

There is a time for everything, and the secret of success in life lies in doing things at just the right minute.

A veterinary surgeon had occasion to instruct a colored stableman how to administer medicine to an ailing horse. He was to get a common tin tube—a bean blower—put a dose of the medicine in it, insert one end of the tube into the horse's mouth, and blow vigorously into the other end, and so force the medicine down the horse's throat.

Half an hour afterward, the colored man appeared at the surgeon's office, looking very much out of sorts.

"What is the matter?" inquired the doctor, with some concern.

"Why, boss, dat hoss, he—he blew fust!"

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Story of "Scotty" Hero of Zinc Fields.

Picture a man who has been badly bent at times—aye, even broke unto the last jitney—one who has tasted the bitter things of life along with the sweet, one who has seen a fortune swept away in a twinkling, only to be regained after a long, persistent struggle. Picture a good loser, who has lost more than most men will ever earn, and who pins his faith in the mining industry to such an extent that he laughs at failure and hangs on like a bulldog until he succeeds, and you have a mind's-eye view of J. M. Short, the best known operator in the mining district near Joplin, Mo.—the "Scotty" of the zinc fields.

Thirty-two years ago Short was working for $1.25 a per day at Galena, Kan., and a few years later moved to Joplin, landing here with the price of one ham sandwich. He worked for low wages until he had saved enough to buy a prospect drill, and decided to look for ore on his own responsibility.

His first few holes were blanks; the cost of sinking them was heavy, considering Short's limited finances. For a time it looked as though he was destined to go back to wages. However, he hung on until almost his last penny was gone; then luck smiled on him, and he made his first strike. He had been watching the drill clippings for so long and finding only barren pieces of rock that he could hardly believe the truth when at last the sand bucket brought up a quantity of yellow-looking dirt, rich in zinc ore.

Short sold this "prospect" for $5,000 cash, and immediately invested the whole amount in what was known as the Bunker Hill Mine, which netted him $65,000 in eighteen months, part of which—$3,000—he reinvested in the Sacagawea Zinc Company, from which he profited, inside of three months, to the tune of $17,000 more. A year later Short again became "dead broke" on another mining venture, and again went to work for wages.

Depriving himself of all luxuries and many necessities, he continued to work for wages until he had saved up $1,800, when he determined to again "try his hand." One day, during an extremely dry summer, he was driving by a piece of land where the Sitting Bull Mine was later developed. He noticed a man sinking a hole to get water at a point where a spring had once been. The land was low and boggy and the digger was taking out shale and soapstone. The formation looked good to Short, and he at once procured a forty-acre lease from the owner. With $1,800, his sole capital, Short drilled the ground, discovered a rich run of ore, and put down a shaft to the 185-foot level. The owner of the land put up the capital for building a $15,000 mill. Ninety days later Short had paid for the mill, had $10,000 in the bank to his credit, and had a vast body of ore blocked out which netted him more than $100,000 in profits in the next few months.

Almost immediately he secured another lease and opened up what is known as the Pocahontas Mine, from which he cleared another $100,000. Then followed in quick succession the Geronimo and the Waneta-Pearl. Short is now interested in, if not the entire owner of, more than a dozen valuable properties, so that, with the sudden jump in price of zinc concentrates from thirty-five to seventy-five dollars per ton, this Scotty of the zinc mines has but faint idea of what he is really worth.

Talk is Cheap.

A retired United States army officer says the European war is "a horrible slaughter, which should be halted by some neutral power." The neutral power that attempted to halt it forcibly would simply increase the slaughter and add its own blood to the crimson tide.

Canada Spends Millions on Ports.

Canada is making extensive improvements in her seaports. At Halifax work is under way which will cost $10,000,000, while at St. John, New Brunswick, $8,000,000 is being spent. Levis, opposite Quebec, is building the largest dry dock in America. Much work is also being done at the Pacific coast ports.

Finds Petrified Snake in Rock.

While blasting some limestone rocks in the side of Stone Mountain, near Big Laurel, Va., the workmen found a petrified snake imbedded in the rocks. The snake was coiled as if making ready to spring at something, and is believed to have been a copperhead.

Failures.

Commercial failures in the United States last year were 8,344.

Cossacks Rescue Little Girl.

A little incident, told in Danish newspapers which have arrived in Chicago, shows that the Cossacks are not as cruel as they are sometimes depicted. Recently while advancing against a detachments of Turks, a company of Cossacks found a little girl, two years old, who had been deserted by her parents in their precipitate flight. They brought the little ones to the headquarters of the regiment, where she received food and was made comfortable in every way.

In the Greek Catholic Church in the village of Bardus the little foundling was baptized according to the orthodox ritual. The commander of the regiment and Princess Gelovana, wife of a member of the Duma, served as godparents of the child. The little girl received the name of Alexandre Donshaga, after the regiment known as Don Cossacks. The officers promised to contribute monthly toward the maintenance and education of this little "daughter of the regiment."

Girl in Soldier's Uniform.

People in the vicinity of Cooke's Church, on Queen Street, in Toronto, at two-thirty in the afternoon were left wondering whether the Germans had landed in the city in such large numbers that the milita authorities had found it necessary to mobilize a regiment of the fair sex to aid the soldiers in driving them back.

The cause of the sensation was a pretty young lady named Clara Philip, who, by the terms of a wager she had made with a lady friend, had to walk down Mutual Street from Shuter to Queen Street dressed in full soldier's uniform, for a box of chocolates.

The young lady with curly hair peeping out under the service cap, looked bewitching in the uniform, although it was somewhat too large for her, and despite the fact that the heavy army boots were dispensed with for her own dainty pair of "threes."

"It certainly did feel funny walking down the street with some of the people turning up their noses at me and others convulsed in laughter, but I was determined to win the bet, and did," said Miss Philip, after her sensational parade.

"Oh, it was funny. On the way along I had the pleasure of saluting a 'brother' soldier, who with much grace returned the salute, and a little farther along a 'guardian of the law' discreetly turned and walked in the opposite direction. That is the way I became richer by a large box of chocolates."

Sings as Surgeons Operate.

Zouave Besson, a French trooper, while undergoing an operation at the Grand Palais, in Paris, a hospital for the last three months, lustily sang the "Marseillaise" from the beginning to the end, weakening slightly toward the close of the last stanza.

This patriotic demonstration is a contradiction of the proverb that a good man will swear while he is under the influence of chloroform. After the operation Besson's nurse told him of his patriotism in singing the national anthem.

He replied: "When I was just going on I realized that I was singing the 'Marseillaise,' and brought all my will power to bear to sing it to the end." He recovered nicely.

Death of a Spy.

Death to all spies is the military rule. One of the most dramatic of the many minor tragedies of the war was seen at Lassigny recently, when a captive in a black gown, to all appearances a nun, was suddenly led before a firing squad and shot down at the officer's command. The startled onlookers learned that the squad's victim was a daring young lieutenant in the German army who had got inside the French lines by donning a nun's attire. So good was his disguise that he had gone for a considerable distance and probably had obtained much information that would have proved valuable had he escaped.

Had the spy been a woman, the penalty would have been the same. Such is the law of war. Many women spies have been caught and executed.

Oldest Veteran in Southwest Section.

Probably the oldest, and surely the most noted Confederate veteran now living in the Southwest is Doctor Thomas E. Berry, of Oklahoma City, Okla., a typical "Kentucky colonel," who is now eighty-three years old. He walks as straight as a young Indian, has never used intoxicating beverages or tobacco and has never suffered from fever or other sickness, and during his long and eventful career he has been soldier, globe trotter, author, duelist, physician, and surgeon.

In the Civil War he served with the Confederate generals, Morgan and Forest, was captured twelve times by the Yankees, and escaped that many times from their prisons. He received twenty-two bullet wounds and several saber cuts during the four years of fighting, and since the close of the war has fought six duels in foreign lands.

Doctor Berry served under Joe Shelby in Mexico and helped to organize the French army in Algeria. He rendered valuable service to King Menelik in Abyssinia and sojourned for a while in Constantinople, where, like many others, he swam across the Bosporus. He received several decorations from foreign rulers, but never wears them in this "land of the free."

In a recent chat with a friend Doctor Berry said:

"My father and grandfather admonished me to never forgive or forget an insult; never offer the left cheek after having been slapped on my right cheek. They also requested me to always keep the Berry escutcheon untarnished; never be a craven nor a coward."

The doctor comes from a wealthy family that owned large areas of land near Perryville, Ky., but the Civil War made them comparatively poor. The doctor wrote a book entitled "Four Years With Generals Forest and Morgan." He is now writing a book about his foreign military service.

He has also made several valuable discoveries in materia medica and surgery while practicing medicine forty years. Some of them are very original and should not be allowed to perish with the doctor's death.

Doctor Berry, though one of the best physicians and surgeons, quit practicing four years ago. He is an inveterate reader and has read 2,000 books. He also enjoys newspapers and magazines. It is needless to say that the doctor's personal appearance and courteous manners denote him to be a gentleman and scholar. He belongs to no religious sect, but is what he terms a "practical Christian." He will no doubt be as brave when Death calls him as he always has been during his long life. The doctor is optimistic, however, and says he will probably live to be a centenarian.

Some Facts You May Not Know.

The highest speed ever attained by man on the face of the earth is one mile in 25.2 seconds, equivalent to 142.85 miles an hour, according to the *Railway Age Gazette*. It was in an automobile run by Teddy Tetzlaff on the level salt beds at Salduro, Utah, 112 miles west of Salt Lake City. The best speed ever made on rails was with an electric car between Berlin and Zossen, Germany, 130.5 miles an hour.

Birds, in the construction of their nests, almost without exception avoid bright-colored materials, which might possibly lead to the discovery of their place of abode by an enemy.

Apple wood, used almost exclusively for saw handles, also furnishes the material for many so-called briarwood pipes.

On a peace footing the Portuguese army consists of 32,000 men. When fully mobilized, the army should have 105,000 first-line troops and 145,000 of the second to put into the field.

In Germany, one man in 213 goes to college; in Scotland, one in 520; in the United States, one in 2,000, and in England, one in 5,000.

Damage to American crops by insects yearly amounts to $580,000,000.

There are fewer suicides among miners than among any other class of workmen.

A booby is not merely a human dunce, but is a Bahama bird, which is so spiritless that when attacked by other birds it fails to fight and gives up the fish it has caught without resistance.

Drawings of human beings and animals in ancient caves in France are regarded as proof that man was right-handed as far back as in the stone age.

Taking Precautions.

A rosy-cheeked youngster, dressed in his best clothes, entered the village post office and carefully laid a huge slice of iced cake on the counter.

"With my sister's, the bride's, compliments, and will you please eat as much as you can," he said.

The postmistress smiled delightedly.

"How very kind of the bride to remember me!" she cried. "Did she know of my weakness for wedding cake?"

"She did," answered the youngster coldly, "and she thought she'd send over a bite of it this afternoon just to take the edge off your appetite before she posted any boxes off to her friends."

Kitchner's Caustic Comment.

A story is going the rounds about what Lord Kitchener, the British war secretary, said the other day after he had inspected some defense works on the east coast of England. It is short and sweet.

The war minister motored from point to point, walked over the ground, but never said a word all afternoon until the moment he was leaving for London. Then he opened his grim mouth.

"Those trenches of yours," he said, "wouldn't keep out the Salvation Army."

Many Wolves in Texas.

The people of Texas destroyed 98,600 wolves and wild cats—including fifty-three panthers and twenty-two leopards—between September 1, 1912, and March, 1914, according to the State comptroller. But there are many thousands more of these wild beasts still alive, a serious menace to the rapidly growing industry of sheep and Angora-goat raising.

Bandit Starr is Second Robin Hood.

Is Henry Starr, of Lawton, Okla., the bandit chief, another Robin Hood? Does he, while engaged in robbing banks, keep in mind the hardships of the poor, as did the picturesque highwayman and poacher of early England? If only a part of the stories told of Starr are true, he might be called the "Robin Hood of Oklahoma," although just now he is in Lincoln County Jail at Chandler, suffering from a broken leg, and with a long prison term pretty thoroughly mapped out for him. But here is what some of his admirers say he did:

"These things are of no value to me, but I'd hate it if the farmers had them to pay," and with that remark Henry Starr, the bandit leader who, with his band of desperadoes, robbed two banks at Stroud and was shot down and captured by eighteen-year-old Paul Curry, once threw a heavy bundle of mortgages and notes, with a stone tied to them, into California Creek in Northern Oklahoma, and they were never recovered. Starr and his men had taken the bank's papers when they rifled the bank at Caney, Kan., several years ago, and he said he took them just so the farmers would not have them to pay.

This incident in Starr's bandit career was told by a long-time resident of the Cherokee country. He has known Starr for a number of years, has played poker with him frequently, and he insists that Starr is really one of the kindliest of men. After the Kansas robbery the Starr gang rode into northern Oklahoma and hid for some time, and it was at this time that the mortgages and notes were destroyed. The total value of the papers was perhaps never known, but a man who saw them declares the bundle was a foot thick.

It was following this same robbery, too, that Starr made one of his most spectacular get-aways. He and two men rode into an isolated community during the night and concealed themselves in a big stone barn, which was on the edge of a small valley with hills not far distant and almost surrounding it. Starr and his men slept until late in the day and then played pitch and shot craps for the small change they had obtained at the bank. They would shoot for a handful of the small silver, dimes and quarters, without any attempt being made to ascertain the amount.

The whereabouts of Starr and his two companions became known to the county sheriff, who, with a posse of twenty or thirty men, went to the barn with the intention of capturing the trio. The members of the posse were stationed on the hills surrounding the barn, and they thought it would be impossible for the outlaws to escape. When Starr was notified of the presence of the officers, he went into the barnyard and motioned to the sheriff, whom he knew, to confer with him. When the sheriff rode into the yard, Starr shook hands with him as though he was glad to meet an old friend, and then said:

"I am going to leave here at five o'clock; there are three of us. If you do not want your men hurt, you had better get them out of the way, for when we start we are going through your lines. Tell your men that for me."

The sheriff returned to his men, called them together, and told them what Starr had said; within five minutes there was not a man other than the sheriff left within rifle distance of Henry Starr. That evening at five, as he had announced, Starr and his men rode quietly, and without being molested, away from the barn and toward the Osage Hills.

That Starr's wife was the original of a photograph, "The Cherokee Milkmaid," which was published world-wide several years ago, is the statement of Representative Walter R. Eaton, of Muskogee and Oilton. Eaton was engaged at that time in promoting the town site of Porum, and was going through the country in that vicinity with a photographer getting pictures to advertise that section.

Late one evening Eaton and the photographer drove by the home of Mrs. Starr, Henry's mother, at a time when a very pretty young woman was milking a cow in the barnyard. The entire scene was one that would make a beautiful picture, and the two men finally persuaded the young woman to pose for several pictures.

"We got one fine picture," said Eaton, "which we labeled 'The Cherokee Milkmaid.' It attracted instant attention because of its artistic merits and was published widely throughout the United States in both newspapers and magazines. It was about a year afterward that this young woman married Henry Starr." Eaton says the young woman was a school-teacher at the time and was boarding at the Starr home."

Boy Hero Saves Five Lives.

The heroism of Aaron S. Ashbrook, twelve years old, saved the lives of his mother, his grandmother, two sisters, and his uncle, George Ashbrook, when they were trapped in the second story of their burning home in Cynthiana, Ky.

Escape was cut off by means of the stairway, and the little fellow leaped from the second-story window, and, running to a barn, secured a ladder, which he placed to the window, and the inmates of the house escaped without injury, with the exception of Mrs. Mary Gray, the aged mother of Mrs. Ashbrook, who fell from the ladder and was badly injured. The house was totally destroyed.

Town of 4,000; No Post Office.

Although boasting of a population of almost 4,000, and with mail business sufficient, it is said, to justify free delivery, Oilton, Okla., the recent metropolis of the Cushing oil field, has no post office. Residents have chipped in and employed men to sort the mail, while some concerns have employed their own carriers.

Two months ago Oilton was an alfalfa field. To-day it is one of the fastest-growing towns in the country. It is the southern terminus of the recently completed Oil Belt Terminal Railroad.

It is a great sight when the mail comes in. If it is not raining, the mail is sorted out in piles on the ground. Usually the entire populace stands around watching the assorting of the mail.

The post office department has been requested to designate a post office at Oilton.

Builds Town Near His Farm.

Because he raised 150,000 bushels of wheat in 1914 and needed a place to market it without a haul of ten miles, Ben Foster, a large land owner, of Colby, Kan., built a town of his own. He constructed an elevator, a coal and lumber yard, and some houses to go with it. The town was named Breton.

Boy Flags and Saves a Train.

An attempt to wreck an east-bound Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad passenger train, near Eastbrook, W. Va., was frustrated by a boy, who flagged the train in time to prevent it from running into an obstruction placed on the track. A pile of ties had been placed on the track at the end of a curve. Railroad police are investigating.

Boston Has Giant Lobster.

The great-great-grandfather of all lobsters—according to Mike O'Donnell, who is an authority on such matters—has arrived in Boston, Mass. It is on exhibition in a stall in the Quincy Market.

The lobster, which in its natural state weighed thirty-three pounds and one ounce, measures forty-two inches from the tip of its tail to the end of its giant claws, the body alone measuring twenty-three and one-half inches. Since arriving here the lobster has been boiled, the meat removed, and the shell painted so that it now looks much the same as it did when it left the waters of Newfoundland.

This giant lobster, the biggest one ever seen here, according to some authorities, and one of the biggest on record, was caught off Grand Manan by a fisherman named John Moses.

Buy-a-Pig Movement, Latest.

Isn't it about time to buy a pig? This is no joke. One of the causes of the high cost of living is in the fact that society is growing faster than the farmers. There is no more profitable animal than a pig. He improves the dressing and gives the gardener a valuable asset to begin the season with. He stands in the doorway to keep the wolf away through the winter. And the social part of it is no small item. The pig is the most social of animals, especially when he is hungry, and a good pig has a continuous appetite. It is no disgrace for any one to raise a pig—not even a schoolteacher. Buy a pig and get your name on the roll of honor.

Motor Saw for Felling Trees.

In attempting to develop an electrically operated device for bucking and felling trees, a lumber company in Marshfield, Ore., constructed a portable motor-driven chain saw, which will cut through a two-foot log in less than a minute, declares the *Electrical World*. The cutting element consists of a motor-driven saw-toothed chain traveling around the peripheries of two pulleys, one at each end of the frame. The motor is connected direct to one of the pulleys and is supplied with electricity through a flexible cord. The apparatus weighs only eighty pounds complete.

Left Home on Freight; Back in Limousine.

To celebrate the anniversary of forty years ago, when he jumped a freight at the old Delanco, N. J., station and beat his way in a side-door palace car to a near-by metropolis in search of a chance to make good, which he thought his home had denied him, a former Delanco boy came back a day or two ago in a limousine to call on old friends and renew the friendships of schooldays.

The boy was John Cahill, who is now chief counsel of the American Bell Telephone Company, with offices in New York, London, and Paris.

Is Given Fullest Penalty.

Judge Maxwell sentenced Merton C. Pierce, of Canton, Pa., to three months in jail and a fine of $500 and costs of prosecution, for furnishing liquor to a person of known intemperate habits. Pierce pleaded guilty to supplying liquor to a man who could not buy for himself.

"Oh, that the law was more severe in such cases," said Judge Maxwell. "I have the utmost contempt for a man who will buy liquor for a man who is forbidden to buy it himself, and would like to send you to jail for a longer period, but the law does not allow. However, I will give you the fullest penalty, and that will

keep you behind the bars for at least six months," said the judge, in passing sentence.

Another Canton man has been arrested on the same charge, but will fight the case.

This Cow is Strong for Twins.

James Billingsley, a farmer residing near Axtell, Kan., has a Red Polled cow that has made a record in raising calves. The animal, though only eight years old, has given birth to eight calves, four of which were born within a period of thirteen months. A year ago she gave birth to twins, and recently she gave birth to a set of twins.

The cow is a fine milker, and all of her calves have brought prices as high as fifty dollars a head.

Lone Hunter's Tragic End.

"Have been torn up by a brown bear. No chance to get out. Good-by."

Mortally wounded, and with his right arm incapacitated, King Thurman, a lone hunter and trapper on Chickaloon Flats, Alaska, crawled to his cabin, printed the above note with his left hand, and then shot himself with his rifle.

This was the story that was read by the hunters who found Thurman's body in his cabin two weeks ago and reported the tragedy to the authorities at Seward, Alaska.

Twin Brothers Marry Sisters.

Ashland, Pa., had a novel wedding, when Lewis and James Baglin, twin brothers, were married to Ruth and Ada Maurer, sisters, by Reverend M. H. Jones.

Refuses to Quit on Pension.

Thomas Strong, of Pine Meadow, Conn., who has been a trackman on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad for more than forty years, and is nearly eighty years old, has refused to be retired on a pension, saying he wants to die in harness. He says he wouldn't know what to do with himself if he quit work.

Mustn't "Cuss" by Wireless.

Radio operators in the United States can't cuss each other out or use profanity or indecent language of any kind "in the air."

A few days ago an operator in the commercial station in Massachusetts ended up a mesage with a word that shocked the inspector in the government station at Boston, where it was picked up. The department of commerce has sent the offending operator a strong letter of reprimand, warning him to be careful of his language in the air in the future or he would lose his license.

Cat's Cradle Cost One Hundred Dollars.

Louis Newman, of Bayonne, N. J., owns a cat which is the possessor of a litter of five kittens which Newman values at twenty dollars a piece, despite their being decidedly common cats, of the back-fence variety.

Two weeks ago Newman left his safe open and later missed a roll of bills, containing one hundred dollars. Chief Michael S. Reilly, of the Bayonne police, and the entire detective force examined the premises and found them clewless.

Newman solved the mystery himself. In the woodshed at the rear of his home, at 73 West Twenty-sixth Street, he heard a cat's voice, and spied Spondulix, the household pet, in a box with five kittens. Newman picked one up and at the same time caught sight of something green at the bottom of the box. He investigated and found four ten-dollar bills, two twenties, two fives, and some twos.

The mother cat, in seeking for something with which to line her cradle, had appropriated the money from the safe.

Hog Without Food or Water.

That a hog can live fifty-five days without food or water has been proven. Burch Dowell, of Cookville, Tenn., one of Putnam County's prosperous farmers, states that he has a Duroc hog that lived for fifty-five days without either food or water, in a deep gully into which it had fallen and became entangled in the dense undergrowth, rendering its escape impossible.

The hog was accidentally discovered a few days ago by Dowell, who extricated it from its helpless predicament. It had lost 175 pounds in weight, but was still alive, and bids fair to rapidly recover its former vigor.

Oldest Writing is of War on Locusts.

A number of ancient Sumerian tablets recording the deeds of the Babylonians thousands of years ago have just been deciphered by George A. Barton, at the University of Pennsylvania museum. One of these tablets, which tells how a farmer rid his field of locusts and caterpillars, is dated 4,000 B. C., and is the oldest piece of writing extant, according to an announcement to-night by officials of the museum. The farmer, Doctor Barton's translation says, called in a necromancer, who "broke a jar, cut open a sacrifice, a word of cursing he repeated, and the locusts and caterpillars fled." For this service he received a tall palm tree.

Death in Electric Wringer.

Miss Margaret McConnell, aged thirty, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David L. McConnell, of Washington, Pa., a society girl and active in church and charitable work, met a horrible death while investigating the mechanism of an electric clothes wringer that had been installed in the home that morning.

A long scarf the girl had thrown about her head caught in the wringer and she was strangled before her mother, who was standing close by, could shut off the current or go to her assistance.

Mrs. McConnell, too late, made frantic efforts to save the life of her daughter. Unsuccessful, she summoned aid and then collapsed.

Pleads for Aged "Boy" Drug Fiend.

Pleading for her sixty-year-old "boy," who, she says, will die if he is not permitted to obtain the drugs denied him by the Harrison antidrug bill, an eighty-one-year-old Colorado woman has written a pitiful letter to Doctor B. R. Reese, of the Federal internal revenue division of the treasury department. She addressed her letter to President Wilson, but Secretary Tumulty sent it to Doctor Reese, whose office is the clearing house of such correspondence.

Much as the appeal of the old Colorado woman moved the officials, no exception will be made in that case.

There is no intention on the part of the internal revenue division to issue blanket permits to obtain drugs for individual cases.

Cheer Their Boy Soldiers.

Paris was enlivened early this week by gay crowds of conscripts of the 1916 class parading the streets to the strains of the "Marseillaise" and other patriotic songs previous to departing to join their regiments in the center and the south of France.

These nineteen-year-old recruits compare favorably with those of previous levies, and they showed the better effect of physical training in preparation for their service in the army.

All appeared to be full of confidence, and they departed without a sign of reluctance or regret.

Wet and Dry Vote for Alaska.

The Alaska Senate passed a bill submitting territorial prohibition to the voters at the November election in 1916. The bill has already passed the House. If the voters approve prohibition, it will become effective January 1, 1918.

Missouri Town Gets a Bomb.

The glass in almost every alley window in a half block in the business section of Excelsior Springs, Mo., was broken when what is believed to have been a stick of dynamite was thrown into the alley. One arrest has been made.

A number of people narrowly escaped injury.

The explosion is believed to be the outgrowth of ill feeling engendered at the local-option election here, January 18.

Kills Big She-wolf and All Her Young.

General Putnam, of early-day fame, who crawled into a hole and dispatched a ferocious "painter" therein, has a rival at Worland, near Gillette, Wyo., in the person of Henry Schumacher, who recently tracked a monster she-wolf to her den, and, with six-shooter in hand, crawled in after her.

He had only proceeded a few feet when the wolf sprang for him, but Henry was quick with his gun, as usual, placing several bullets in her head before she could reach him.

Eight pups, about a month old, were found at the end of the den. Schumacher killed them all, but, small as they were, they put up a stiff fight, repeatedly biting him before he succeeded in killing them all. Bounty to the amount of one hundred and fifty-five dollars was collected on the old wolf and her young.

Girl Was Dumb and Now Talks.

Miss Helen Dodge, eighteen years old, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Dodge, of Lestershire, N. Y., born deaf and dumb, will deliver an oral oration at her graduation from the Malone State Institution for the Deaf and Dumb in June.

Miss Dodge's case is considered one of the most remarkable in the history of teaching the deaf and dumb. She was placed in the institution when only four years old, and has been a student there ever since.

Her teacher soon discovered that she was unusually intelligent and began experimenting in an effort to teach her to speak. Her vocal chords were found to be in normal condition, and before she was seven years old she had been taught to make sounds which were intelligible. She now speaks as distinctly and with as much expression as a person with the normal faculty of hearing, and it is declared that hers is the first case of the kind in this or any other institution.

Educates Herself to Free Husband.

Fired with the ambition to become a lawyer, that she may some day obtain the freedom of her husband, who is serving a life sentence for the murder of Charles Reuter, a Tulsa, Okla., lawyer, Mrs. Mamie Baker, dividing her time between household duties and public school, has advanced from the lowest grammar grades to the high school in less than two years. Mrs. Baker is a Bohemian, and unfamiliarity with the English language has been an additional drawback to her.

When she completes high school, it is her aim to enter a law office. She insists she will be a practising attorney in three years.

Mrs. Baker does not seek to obtain the freedom of her husband that she may again live with him, but to take the stain of crime from her name. She has always insisted her husband is innocent of murder.

Horse Stops Fast Express.

An engineer on a fast express on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad received a signal to stop his train near Defiance, Ohio. It was an emergency signal, so the train was stopped as quickly as possible.

The conductor, amazed at the sudden stop, ran to the engine and reached it just as the engineer was preparing to go back to the train to ascertain the trouble. Both were dismayed when told no person had given the signal.

An investigation of the express car, however, revealed that a horse had the signal cord in its mouth and was pulling it with all its might.

Forgets He's in Prison as He Hears Fifes Play.

A fife-and-drum corps visited the State Penitentiary, at Joliet, Ill., to give the prisoners a treat.

The 1,500 convicts pushed back their plates when the corps marched down the aisle of the big dining hall to the stirring tune of "Marching Through Georgia."

A grizzled old man seated at one of the benches rose and followed, keeping step with the players. He was Thomas McNally, a life convict from Chicago, who for twenty-five years has been "No. 3,692."

"I am an old soldier—fought in the Civil War," he mumbled in apology when the music stopped. "I forgot where I was."

An appeal for McNally's pardon is pending. It is supported by the judge before whom he was tried and twenty lawyers who believe he is innocent.

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